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The Chalmers Lectures


EIGHTH SERIES

THE SOCIAL IDEAL

AND

DR CHALMERS' CONTRIBUTION TO

CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS



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THE SOCIAL IDEAL

AND

DR CHALMERS' CONTRIBUTION
TO CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS

BY

J. WILSON HARPER, D.D.

Edinburgh

MACNIVEN & WALLACE

1910

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

FOREWORD

UNDER the terms of the *Chalmers Trust* the Lecturer is required to deliver six lectures. All those who have had the honour of holding the office of Lecturer under this Trust, have, however, written treatises on their respective subjects. Following the precedent which they have thus set, I have also attempted a detailed treatment of my subject. For the sake of convenience I have put my lectures into the form of chapters; and in this form they are greatly extended.

In the opening chapter I describe the method which I have adopted in dealing with the Social Ideal and Dr Chalmers' contribution to Christian economics. This method, I may here state, was deliberately chosen after several alternative plans were considered.

I wished to give the utmost prominence to Dr Chalmers' writings on economics. His great ecclesiastical services have cast his economic writings into the shade. Few to-day know the intense passion with which he wrote upon economic subjects; or how these engrossed his attention; or the amount of thought and time he devoted to a scientific treatment of social problems; or how earnest was his desire that the Christian Church should give to economic questions the attention which they deserve.

I am hopeful that I have succeeded in, at least,

doing something towards bringing his splendid economic services into the light.

But besides supplying evidence of the eminence of Dr Chalmers as an economist, I also wished to make an examination of the factors which operate in social life, and of the philosophy which justifies, or gives at least support to these factors. My aim has been to make a contribution to the solution of the social questions of the day. To accomplish this purpose I recognised that an investigation of all that bears upon the social ideal was essential.

What is the situation at the present time? The Social Movement has within recent years been greatly accelerated. But notwithstanding the passionate appeals of Dr Chalmers to Churchmen to give thoughtful attention to this Movement, the great majority of them have stood aside, and allowed it to develop without even attempting to give it direction.

Men outside the pale of the Christian Church have directed the Movement, and are still guiding it. I know no more interesting or fruitful subject of study, none that contains louder warning and sterner reproof to Christian men, than that of the heroic and self-denying endeavours of social reformers, from the days of Fourier and Louis Blanc, who with happiest optimism outlined bright, but also fantastic ideals, to those of Marx and Engels, who, as a writer like Werner Sombart admits, have taken all the poetry and imagination out of the Movement, and have materialised it, offering to their followers nothing higher, as an object of worship, than the material when it has been transmuted by the human mind.

Their religion may even to the philosophic student be difficult to understand ; to "the man in the street," upon whom it is pressed, it is certainly the offering of a stone for bread. But while their religion is far too impersonal and inadequate to meet man's deep needs, it must be acknowledged that these men have been singularly devoted to social betterment. They have rendered services of the most disinterested order. Their unselfish labours have also been manifold. They are now not only guiding the Social Movement, but are also giving it momentum and volume.

Can Churchmen stand any longer aside? Is it not their duty to attempt a reading of social life? Must they not interpret the ethics and economics of the Schools and of the Factory, not merely in the terms, but in the spirit of the Christian Faith?

Unfortunately opposition to this sacred task comes from within the Church. One cannot shut one's eyes to the fact that the endeavour to apply Christian principles to land, labour, and capital is to incur the displeasure of many members of the Church, and to awaken the fears of her leaders. Evangelical fervour is allowed to be consistent with the broadest, and even the most uncritical views respecting the authorship and text of the Scriptures ; but the same fervour is said to be destroyed whenever one deals with land, and labour, and capital. Socialism is interpreted as meaning only a different distribution of wealth, and therefore, it is argued, the Church can have nothing to do with it.

Those who thus judge make their own premises ; they do not see that Socialism is a spirit, a tendency, and

may have now one, and now another manifestation. They do not realise that the principle expressed by the words, "No man liveth unto himself," is socialistic, and must be applied to all that touches life and concerns man. They therefore make no adequate attempt to ascertain the causes of social distress, and little or no response to the loud and bitter cry of the unemployed, the starving, and the defenceless. Economic, as well as moral, laws are broken by many who are eager to be rich, and they offer no protest.

Nor do they give students preparing for the Christian ministry an opportunity of informing themselves as to the social work which will lie to their hands. I have spoken plainly concerning this manifest injustice to the future clergy. Here I content myself with saying that it is unfair to send men to parishes without giving them an opportunity of knowing all that can be ascertained respecting the Social Movement, and to what extent it needs the spirit of Christ in order to its issuing in the highest good of the individual and of society.

There exists the most abundant evidence that Dr Chalmers was often profoundly depressed in spirit as he contemplated the Church's indifference to the social problems of his day. He was frequently misunderstood and misrepresented. Mrs Oliphant, who writes by far the best of the shorter biographies of Dr Chalmers, is at a loss to know why he left the Glasgow *pulpit* for the St Andrews *chair*. The reason is quite obvious. It was his interest in economic questions. His great aim was to Christianise the science.

But though misunderstood, Dr Chalmers went on his way. He paid as little heed as possible to those who

misrepresented him. His writings prove that he was filled with a holy passion for the improvement of the social conditions, and the moral character of the tens of thousands of toilers. He was evangelical. His conception of the gospel did not, however, hinder him from giving attention to such commonplace things as land, labour, and capital. It rather urged him to the task. Accordingly he earnestly strove to give the Social Movement a right direction. That the Movement has been too much materialised is largely due to the neglect of his many warnings on the part of Christian people.

I have only one more introductory remark to make. In the following pages I have not often brought in the name of religion, but I have tried to bring its spirit to bear upon all the questions discussed; and I have also endeavoured to show that if the spirit of the Christian Faith receives obedience, the mightiest and most gracious influence will then operate effectively towards the moral and social elevation of the people, and the transformation of society.

My thanks are due to the Rev. Andrew Thom, M.A., Tullibody, the Rev. Robert Mackenzie, M.A., and William Miller, Esq., Alloa, for kindly reading the proofs; and in a special manner I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Rector Blair of the Alloa Academy, for many valuable suggestions while the work was passing through the press.

J. WILSON HARPER.

THE GRANGE MANSE.

ALLOA, *August* 1910.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
DR CHALMERS' INTEREST IN ECONOMIC STUDIES . . .	1-9

- I. Outline of Subjects to be Treated. II. Application by Chalmers of Economics to Social Problems. III. Chalmers' High Estimate of the Value of Christian Ethics as applied to Economic Questions. IV. The Unity of Social Life, and the Need for applying Mental and Moral Science.

CHAPTER II

DR CHALMERS' EQUIPMENT FOR ECONOMIC WORK . . .	10-22
--	-------

- I. Reception accorded to Chalmers' *Political Economy*, and his Justification for teaching Christian Economics. II. Chalmers' Special Fitness to deal with Economic Questions: (1) His First Book; (2) his Social Work in St John's Parish, Glasgow; (3) his Professorship in St Andrews; (4) his Application of Christian Ethics to Business Transactions.

CHAPTER III

HOW DR CHALMERS WAS INDUCED TO STUDY ECONOMICS . . .	23-33
--	-------

- I. The Influence of the Writings of Condorcet, Godwin, and Malthus. II. The Genesis of Chalmers' Interest in Social Problems made Apparent. III. Chalmers' Treatment of the Question of Population.

CHAPTER IV

DR CHALMERS' EMINENCE AS AN ECONOMIST . . .	34-49
---	-------

- I. Chalmers, a Great Ecclesiastic and Theologian: Chalmers compared with Ruskin. II. Testimonies to his Eminence as an Economist. III. Chalmers' Writings on Economics relatively small: his use of his Time and Gifts an example to all Clergymen. IV. Poverty not a Necessary Condition of Social Life. V. Chalmers' Fidelity to Principles, and some of his Remarkable Pronouncements.

CHAPTER V

	PAGE
THE SOCIAL IDEAL: ITS CLAIMS FOR CONSIDERATION	50-61

- I. Reasons for considering the Social Ideal. II. Agencies not Identical with the Social Ideal. III. The Social Ideal cannot be defined: but some things known, and what these imply. IV. The Claim of "Right to Work" examined. V. Social Evils not due to Economic Causes alone.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIAL IDEAL: IS IT RECEIVING SCIENTIFIC TREATMENT?	62-76
---	-------

- I. A Science of Society is Possible. II. The Scientific Spirit Obeyed by Many, and Neglected by Some Reformers. III. Haphazard Methods of Social Reform due (1) to Poverty and Suffering; (2) to Lack of Social Instruction; and (3) to Pressure of Competition. IV. Workmen's Protective Measures. V. Masters' Combinations. VI. Workmen and Parliamentary Agencies. VII. What a Survey of the Social Field reveals.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIAL IDEAL: AN INSPIRATION TO SOCIAL SERVICE	77-86
--	-------

- I. The Social Ideal briefly described, and the Inspiration which it evokes. II. The Present State of Society and the Enthusiasm which belongs to Social Work. III. Relative value of *Condition* and *Character*. IV. Why Inspiration is often lacking. V. Inspiration guided by Intelligence makes for good Social Work.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIAL IDEAL: SOME IMPORTANT AIDS	87-101
---------------------------------------	--------

- I. Material and Spiritual Factors. II. The Respective Places of the Spiritual and Social, and an Analysis of the Former. III. The Aid which the Church can render. IV. The Aid which Patient Investigation affords. V. The Aid from Parliament and Voluntary Societies. VI. The Aid from Philosophical Research.

CONTENTS

xiii

CHAPTER IX

	PAGE
THE CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL PROGRESS . . .	102-115

I. Knowledge of Present Conditions Essential. II. Complexity of these Conditions, and how Social Problems are approached. III. The Industrial Questions of the Day, and Attempted Solutions. IV. What are the Pursuits of the Working Classes? V. The Influence of the Past upon Present-Day Problems. VI. Reflection Essential and Beneficial. VII. An Old View of Society now emphasised, and the Rich Heritage lying to Hand.

CHAPTER X

PHASES OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT . . .	116-125
------------------------------------	---------

I. All real Progress generally Slow. II. Social Development due to New Ideas entering into Men's Minds. III. The Political Power now in the Hands of Workmen. IV. Possible Political Changes, and the eagerness of Many to render Social Service.

CHAPTER XI

THE SOCIAL IDEAL: ATTITUDES TOWARD IT . . .	126-135
---	---------

I. The Social Ideal described. II. The Incredulous Attitude. III. The Cautious Attitude.

CHAPTER XII

THE SOCIAL IDEAL: ATTITUDES TOWARD IT (<i>continued</i>)	136-145
--	---------

I. The Hopeful Attitude. II. The Confident Attitude. III. Ethics and Economics both Essential to Social Progress. IV. Choice of Attitude and a Clear Perspective Necessary.

CHAPTER XIII

AGENCIES OF THE SOCIAL IDEAL: THEIR RELATIVE POSITIONS	146-159
--	---------

I. Method of Investigation. II. Three Great Agencies—*Liberty*, *Equality*, and *Brotherhood*: Preference for *Brotherhood*. III. The Relation of these Agencies defined. IV. *Liberty*, the First and Positive Agency. V. *Equality* Second in Time and Higher. VI. *Brotherhood* the Superlative Agency.

CHAPTER XIV

SOCIAL AGENCIES: THE NEED OF PHILOSOPHIC PRINCIPLES 150-158

- I. Philosophic Principles cannot be Neglected. II. These Essential when discussing Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. III. Psychological Analysis Essential. IV. Without a Philosophic Theory Social Agencies cannot be Interpreted.

CHAPTER XV

SOCIAL AGENCIES: LIBERTY, ITS FOUNDATION, CHARACTER, AND LIMITS 159-181

- I. Liberty rests upon the Free Exercise of the Will. II. A Theory of Justice Essential: and Categories of Moral Actions. III. A Return to Man as Psychology reveals him as Necessary. IV. Positive and Active Aspects of Liberty.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PROVINCES OF LIBERTY: FIRST CATEGORY, THE POLITICAL PROVINCE 182-192

- I. Origin, Authority, and Limits of Governments. II. Relation of Governments to Industries. III. Limits of Government, a Question of Individualism versus Socialism. IV. Gradual Extension of Power of Government.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PROVINCES OF LIBERTY: SECOND CATEGORY, INTELLECTUAL, RELIGIOUS, AND ECONOMIC PROVINCES 193-203

- I. Liberty of Thought precedes Liberty of Action: Limits of Liberty of Thought. II. Religious Liberty. III. Economic Liberty. IV. Two Categories of Liberty. V. Liberty has well-defined Limits.

CONTENTS

XV

CHAPTER XVIII

	PAGE
SOCIAL AGENCIES: EQUALITY	204-216

I. Equality allows Room for Diversity of Endowments, and for Private Property. II. Some Misrepresentations of Equality. III. Theory of Justice necessary. IV. Equality of Opportunity in Relation (1) to Education; (2) to Child Supervision; (3) to Social Conditions; (4) to Land.

CHAPTER XIX

CLAIMS AND SPHERE OF EQUALITY	217-227
---	---------

I. Need for Moral and Spiritual Factors. II. Dangers Encountered. III. Equality and Extension of Political Rights. IV. Social Equality. V. Legitimate Social Distinctions.

CHAPTER XX

SOCIAL AGENCIES: BROTHERHOOD	228-238
--	---------

I. Past and Present Treatment of Brotherhood. II. How Brotherhood tells upon Liberty and Equality. III. Claims and Arguments on Behalf of Brotherhood.

CHAPTER XXI

BROTHERHOOD AND HISTORY'S TEACHINGS	239-250
---	---------

I. The Problem Brotherhood has to solve. II. How the Sphere of common interests was extended. III. Development of Communal Life. IV. Growth in apprehending Ethical Principles. V. Brotherhood and the Ethics of Christianity.

CHAPTER XXII

THE THINKER AND WORKER	251-264
----------------------------------	---------

I. The Province and Duty of the Thinker. II. The Need for Psychological Analysis. III. Bearing of Mental and Moral Theories upon Social Life. IV. Influence of Utilitarianism upon (1) Commerce; (2) Politics; (3) Religion. V. Idealism and how it tells upon Social Life.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE THEORY OF UTILITY IN OPERATION . . .	PAGE 265-277
--	-----------------

- I. Large Claims of this Theory. II. Its Operations in Business Transactions. III. These Operations called Defensive Organisations into Existence. IV. Fuller Moral Instruction necessary. V. The Industrial Tendency makes for a Higher Moral Standard. VI. Philosophic Research also makes for this Higher Standard.

CHAPTER XXIV

ETHICS AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION . . .	278-294
--	---------

- I. Ethical Theory Essential. II. Claims on Behalf of Idealism. III. Idealism accounts for Social Progress. IV. Ethical *versus* Materialistic Interpretations of Social Life. V. Ethical Theories at Present Propounded. VI. Idealism explains Personality and the growth of Society.

CHAPTER XXV

ECONOMICS AND DR CHALMERS' TREATMENT OF THE SCIENCE	295-309
---	---------

- I. The Value of Economic Science. II. Economic History. III. The Place which Chalmers assigned to Economics. IV. Chalmers' Application of Christian Ethics to Economics. V. Chalmers' Theory of Wealth examined.

CHAPTER XXVI

ECONOMICS : DR CHALMERS' METHOD OF INVESTIGATION	310-327
--	---------

- I. Chalmers' Statement of the Social Questions of his Day. II. His Method in examining these Questions. III. His Treatment of Rent, Agriculture, and the Limits of Land, Commerce, Labour, and Capital. IV. His Description of Trade Cycles. V. His Readings of Social Phenomena.

CONTENTS

xvii

CHAPTER XXVII

	PAGE
ECONOMICS: DR CHALMERS ON TRADE AND AGRICULTURE	328-341

- I. How to read Chalmers' Economic Writings. II. Chalmers on Foreign Trade. III. Intensive Cultivation of Land. IV. Chalmers' Estimate of the Value of Commerce. V. His Economic Teachings justified by Experience.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ECONOMICS: DR CHALMERS ON TAXATION OF LAND .	342-352
--	---------

- I. Chalmers' Treatment of Welfare and Well-being. II. The Demand for a Territorial Impost: (1) To what extent Taxation may be applied; (2) how it bears on Agriculture; and (3) on Landlords.

CHAPTER XXIX

DR CHALMERS' ECONOMIC PRONOUNCEMENTS .	353-368
--	---------

- I. Chalmers' Pronouncements detailed. II. His Treatment of Poverty. III. His Estimate of the Value of Education; and his plea for Moral and Economic Instruction. IV. His Description of the Social Ideal.

INDEX .	369-377
---------	---------

THE SOCIAL IDEAL

CHAPTER I.

DR CHALMERS' INTEREST IN ECONOMIC STUDIES.

I.

THE subject treated in the following pages is different from that of all the lectures which have already been delivered and published under the *Chalmers Trust*. The explanation of the difference is simple. Former lecturers have dealt with Dr Chalmers' ecclesiastical work, and with subjects more or less directly related to that work. These lectures deal with his economic teachings in relation to social well-being, and the realisation of the social ideal.

The *Chalmers Trustees* have judged the present time, when social questions are on all sides being keenly debated, an eminently suitable occasion for directing attention to the splendid service which Dr Thomas Chalmers rendered both by his economic writings and social work. The time is, indeed, suitable, and Chalmers' contribution to economics is of very great value.

He made a special study of economics; but he examined the science in the light of the ethics of the Christian Faith. He had always in view the invaluable contribution which economics, inspired by Christian ethics, might make to social betterment.

2 INTEREST IN ECONOMIC STUDIES

In dealing with Chalmers' contribution to economic science, I shall first try to account for his interest in economics. Next, I shall endeavour to show what was his special equipment for an informed treatment of economic questions ; and how it came to pass that he devoted so much time to the study of them. When this is done, I shall adduce proof of his eminence as an economist.

My main task is, however, to attempt to give an adequate treatment to the social ideal—to its *claims* for consideration, to the *aids, conditions, and phases* of social development, to the *attitudes* which may be adopted towards attainment of the social ideal, and especially to the *agencies* of social progress.

But since economics is one of the agencies by means of which the social ideal will ultimately be reached, and since Chalmers made a thorough investigation of economic questions, and an illuminating contribution to their solution, when my main task is finished, I shall return to his economic writings. I shall then examine in detail his method of investigating economic problems, and his remarkable pronouncements upon economic subjects, which to-day engross the attention of all who are interested in social evolution.

The object which I have in view is not merely to give a restatement of Chalmers' economic principles. A worthier tribute is paid to his great name and work, and a fresher wreath is laid upon his grave by reading the facts and phenomena of social life in the light of his teachings. He wrote and spoke upon economic questions, and always had as his aim the social elevation of the people of his own time ; but the economic

principles for which he strenuously contended apply with peculiar force to the social problems of to-day—and to-morrow.

I purpose, therefore, to attempt a reading of the factors, which make for the realisation of the social ideal in the light of what he and other philosophers and economists have written. In this way the greatest honour is done to him, and at the same time the value of his contributions to social betterment is shown.

II.

Chalmers was profoundly interested in the problems of social life. They appealed to him urgently, and he responded at once to their claims. He perceived, however, at an early period of his life, that economics must be brought to bear on social questions. He also saw that economics, in order to be effective, must rest upon well-verified moral principles. He accordingly at the beginning, and also at every subsequent stage of his career, was all for moralising and Christianising economics.

Chalmers, as a clergyman, stood almost alone in thus advocating the application of economics, inspired by the ethics of the Christian Faith, to social questions. Two men whose writings powerfully influenced the economic and political thought of the times, William Godwin and Thomas Robert Malthus, were clergymen; but these two performed the duties of a minister of the Gospel for a very brief period. Godwin was only for three years in the ministerial office. He was pastor of a Nonconformist congregation, first at Ware, and next at Stow-

market.¹ Malthus was only for a short time curate at Albury. Both gave themselves to the study of politico-economic questions. Godwin, who was dependent upon his literary work for a livelihood, wrote chiefly upon political questions. Malthus, who was unhampered by straitened circumstances, made the study of economics his definite life-work. It was, therefore, an altogether misapplied term which Cobbett used when he disparagingly spoke of the distinguished author of the *Essay on Population* as "parson Malthus."

But Chalmers was from the day of his ordination to the ministry till the end of his life an eminent clergyman; for, even when he occupied the professor's chair, first in St Andrews, and next in Edinburgh, he did much ministerial work, both in preaching and in giving attention to ecclesiastical questions in the courts of the Church. Chalmers was indeed all through his career conspicuously a clergyman; and he was also among the first to perceive that economic studies give invaluable aid to ministers of the Gospel in the discharge of their special duties.

He had a perfect passion for social betterment; but he maintained that it must be effected in a scientific and an orderly manner. He deliberately took his place among that powerful class of sane reformers, who are all for a social evolution in accordance with the dictates of reason and experience, of the highest ethics, and the soundest economics. In his *Journal*, 1st January 1827, he writes: "My chief earthly ambition is to finish a treatise

¹ See *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries*, by C. Kegan Paul, pp. 16-19. Godwin was pastor at Ware in Hertfordshire for one year, 1778-9, and at Stowmarket in Suffolk for two years, 1780-2.

on political economy." This entry is very significant. It shows the trend of his thoughts. It reveals also his deep interest in economic studies. Five years later he published his work, *On Political Economy in connection with the Moral State and Moral Prospects of Society*. This work was, says Dr Hanna, his biographer, "the favourite child of his intellect."¹

Chalmers entertained the highest conceptions of the value of a right interpretation of economic phenomena; and he made not merely one effort, but many endeavours to persuade his fellow-clergymen to study and apply economics. "Next in importance," he writes, "to those truths which are directly religious, do we hold those which relate to the connection between the moral and economic well-being of society"; and he affirms that "between a high tone of character and a high rate of wages there is a most intimate alliance." But he justly complains that while "economists repudiate the moral ingredient as of vastly too ethereal nature for their science," moralists and divines do not perceive the relation of ethics to economics, and "are often found to recoil from political economy as they would from a system of gross utilitarianism."²

"Our ecclesiastics," he writes again, "are too little versant, and have therefore too little respect for the importance of political economy. And our economists stand at fully as wide a distance from things ecclesiastical. Both seem alike unconscious of the strong intermediate link that is between them, seeing that the chief objects

¹ *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers, D.D., LL.D.*, vol. ii. p. 233.

² See preface to *The Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation*, pp. v-viii.

6 INTEREST IN ECONOMIC STUDIES

of the one can only be accomplished through the successful exertions of the other.”¹ He laments “the grievous lack of sympathy or of a common understanding between those two classes”; but he adds, “nevertheless, and however few there may be in consequence, who enter on the walk of this speculation, we are aware of few lessons more deeply interesting and important than those, which teach the reciprocal influences, that pass and repass between the moral character and the economic comfort of a people.”²

III.

To Chalmers economic science was neither “dismal” nor “dry as dust.” He saw it in a new light, because he himself had illumined the science by his application of Christian ethics to its problems. He again and again, therefore, confidently affirmed that morals cannot be separated from economics.

This confident affirmation was not an arbitrary pronouncement. Social questions require a *motif*, and a dynamic for their solution; and he held that Christianity’s high ethical principles alone supply the persuasive influence which can give effect to those social reforms which economic science justifies.

The urgent need for a dynamic is to-day recognised by all social reformers. Some, like Mr H. G. Wells, find it in *good-will*;³ others, like M. Maurice Maeterlinck, discover it in the old Aryan virtues—justice, courage, kindness, and honour; some, like the Japanese,

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³ *New Worlds for Old*, p. 11.

look for it in patriotism and filial piety ; but Chalmers found it in the distinctively Christian moral qualities—righteousness, love, self-sacrifice, humility, and brotherliness.

He brought, therefore, the ethics of the Christian Faith to his economic studies ; and throughout the whole of his writings upon economic subjects he constantly reverts to Christian morals as essential to the right interpretation of economic problems, and especially as necessary when efforts are made to solve them. They supply at once the *motif* and the dynamic, the atmosphere and the ideal.

When he gave the results of his studies to the public in his two volumes on *Political Economy* he startled, and indeed somewhat shocked, the doctrinaire economists. They had never thought of economics as necessarily having a moral basis. Six years after the publication of his work, when Chalmers visited Paris in June 1838, and met Guizot, the famous French statesman said to him that "the connection between the moral and economical was altogether new and unknown in France."¹ Writing at a later date, Chalmers makes the pertinent comment on this remarkable acknowledgment : "In truth," he says, "it is nearly as little studied in England."² His was the distinction of applying ethical principles to economic problems. This had not been attempted on an extensive scale by any writer since the days of Thomas Aquinas until Chalmers undertook the task.

There are still economists who bid away moralists

¹ *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers*, vol. ii. p. 415.

² *The Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation*, preface, p. vii.

8 INTEREST IN ECONOMIC STUDIES

from the economic field. They do not perceive that economics must rest upon a moral basis, and that one's economics is largely the expression of one's ethics. They accordingly succeed in isolating their science from all human interests, save those which are material.

Human life, however, cannot be divided into compartments and these treated as unrelated, the one to the other. Economic practice always assumes ethical principles. To exclude, for instance, the moral qualities of honour and fidelity from economics is to strike at the very foundations of *credit*, upon which all great commercial transactions rest.¹

IV

But one is justified in going further and contending that sociology is without justification and a science of human life impossible unless economics be related to morals, and these again to psychology. Human life is a unity. A deeper view of its content, therefore, obliges one to examine all economic questions in the light of mental and moral science.

I shall have occasion at a later stage to deal with the intimate relation of the sciences of human life, the one to the other; and here it may, therefore, be sufficient to say that a satisfactory interpretation of social phenomena necessitates a careful survey of the teachings of every science which deals with human life. In a single sentence it may be noted, as a sign of the times, that

¹ See Ruskin's *Munera Pulveris*, p. xix, where the moral element in economics is emphasised.

when in December 1907 Professor Westermarck and Professor Hobhouse delivered their inaugural addresses as occupants of the chairs of sociology in the University of London, both gave to their subject the widest setting, and treated it as embracing psychology, ethics, anthropology, political philosophy, the philosophy of history, the growth of such a science as biology, and the study of jurisprudence and religion. This is a most important educational advance. It shows the high estimate set upon social science by the London university.

The unity of life is to-day rightly emphasised by almost all writers, save those who claim for economics an exclusive province. The recognition of this unity is really the key to the perception of the complexity of the conditions and phases of social life. All, therefore, who, like Chalmers, address themselves to the consideration of social problems are obliged, also like him, to relate one science to another, and to take the contributions of each as invaluable aids towards the solution of these problems. Chalmers' interest in economic studies is largely explained, when it is said that he perceived clearly the unity of human life, and applied to its interpretation all that each science contributes.

There was nothing narrow in Chalmers' view of life. His sympathies were deep and sincere. He made a comprehensive survey of the facts of social life; and, therefore, it was eminently natural for him, while studying economics closely, to insist upon taking full benefit of all the light which morals throw on economic questions.

CHAPTER II.

CHALMERS' EQUIPMENT FOR ECONOMIC WORK.

I.

CHALMERS' work on *Political Economy*, which gave to the science for the first time that wide outlook now familiar to most economists, came as a great surprise to almost all his contemporaries. Churchmen were not prepared to receive it; and many, therefore, looked upon the work as the exuberant effusion of a great, but somewhat erratic genius.

The reception given to Chalmers' volumes by many professional economists was very much of the same character; but, in addition, they thought that it was an unjustifiable intrusion on the part of a clergyman, to enter into a province, which they held to be all their own. This is a view which is still taken by some economists whenever a minister of the Gospel ventures to speak of economics, as if it were not his business to know as intimately as possible all that touches and affects human life.

Chalmers, little disturbed by what might be thought or said respecting his bold venture, broke down the barriers, and entered unafraid into the province sacred to economists. But he carried with him all his Christian principles, and to his own surprise he found a new field

within which their application was urgently required. It was chiefly for this reason that Chalmers entertained high conceptions of the value of economic studies, and regarded his own volumes on the science as the work on which, among all his productions, he set the greatest store.

He was an economist by choice, and an ecclesiastic by force of circumstances. He saw in the clearest light the value of economic science; and as he rose from his long study of its teachings he penned the final words: "We cannot bid adieu to political economy without an earnest recommendation of its lessons to all who enter upon the ecclesiastical vocation. They are our Churchmen, in fact, who best carry the most important of these lessons into practical effect."¹

But Chalmers' counsel is deliberately rejected by many theologians who seriously attempt a reasoned answer to the important question which the great ecclesiastic raised. They will have nothing to do with social science in a theological college. It should, they hold, be severely excluded from the studies, which are assumed to be specially necessary for students preparing for the Christian ministry. Dead theological controversies occupy a large part of their time. The living questions, which to-day engage the attention of tens of thousands whom the Church through her ministry should reach and help, are left untouched; and guidance, therefore, in relation to them is made almost impossible.

The loss which is thus sustained is incalculable.

¹ *Political Economy*. Preface to the last edition, p. xv.

12 EQUIPMENT FOR ECONOMIC WORK

Chalmers perceived this clearly, and therefore some of the most impassioned sentences which he ever penned were written to rouse the Church to an adequate sense of the value of the teaching of Christian economics. But his great authority apart, this vital subject demands attention. The improvement of social relationships and the coming of the Kingdom of God alike require that the saving truths of the Gospel should be rightly related to social conditions and should transform them. This is the justification for teaching Christian economics. The duty is as sacred and as imperative as that of teaching divinity students Christian ethics.

II.

But injustice must not be done to Chalmers by assuming, even for a moment, that, when he boldly entered into the economic province, he entered either hurriedly or without preparation.

1. He entertained, as just stated, a very high conception of the value of economics. He formed this conception, too, at a very early period of his life. From the moment, therefore, that he perceived the value of economic science he set himself to study its history and its principles.

How this came to pass is of singular interest. He was licensed as a preacher of the gospel at the exceptionally early age of nineteen. He did not, however, at once look for a parish. He went to Edinburgh, and attended classes at the University. He devoted his time almost exclusively to the study of mathematics and

political economy. These two subjects, it should be remembered, were closely related, the one to the other, in the thought of the economists of Chalmers' day. Almost all economic problems were then expressed in terms of mathematical formulæ. Chalmers made remarkable progress with his studies; and throughout all his subsequent career, even when great ecclesiastical and theological questions were engrossing his attention, they had for him a peculiar fascination.

His settlement as minister of the parish of Kilmany in May 1803, at the age of twenty-three, did not interrupt these studies. He carried on his ministerial work, as he afterwards with profound regret acknowledged, in a perfunctory manner, and at the same time conducted private mathematical classes in St Andrews. But he was also during this period a diligent student of political economy. The evidence of this diligence is seen in the publication on 28th March 1808, five years after his ordination, of an important work entitled, *Inquiry into the Extent and Stability of National Resources*. This was essentially an economic production, and it gave abundant proof both of the care with which Chalmers collected his material, and of the freedom with which he stated his conclusions.

This notable work should have prepared the way for, at least, his friends forming a right appreciation of his volumes on *Political Economy*. He saw not only the situation with which he had to deal, and the problems which demanded solution, but he also set out his arguments with great fulness and clearness.

This early production has an interesting historical

14 EQUIPMENT FOR ECONOMIC WORK

value. It is full of evidence that Chalmers was many years in advance of his time. How far he was before his contemporaries is shown in this, that he anticipates Prince Kropotkin and Sir A. Cotton, who maintain that the natural resources of the country, rightly used, could support its population.¹ For Chalmers contended that though Napoleon might close all foreign ports against Britain, as many then thought he could, the resources of the country would be sufficient for the support of the people.

He adopted a method all his own in explaining and defending this contention. Mr William Spence had published a pamphlet on the same subject in 1807; but Chalmers owed nothing to this Tract, as he had already developed his own arguments before it was issued. Besides, his work is a much more elaborate and detailed treatise of the whole question of the nation's resources.

But in relation to another subject Chalmers was far in advance of most of his contemporaries, and also anticipated many modern fiscal reformers. For, in the same work he treated at some length the question of an Income Tax. A War Tax had been imposed in 1797, and continued to be levied till 1816, when it was abolished. Chalmers, therefore, penned his work while this tax, which was really an Income, though termed a war tax, was exciting men's minds and causing much discussion; but he showed his singular insight into economic questions when in this volume he argued strongly in favour of the tax being equitably graduated.²

¹ See pp. 333-4, where this subject is examined.

² *Vide op. cit.*, pp. 272-4.

This question is still only partially solved. Fiscal reformers, who turn to Chalmers' work, will find many powerful arguments in support of a properly graduated Income tax.

In this same work Chalmers opposed the preservation of any trade by Government subsidies. "Government," he writes, "should take no interest in the preservation of a manufacture which is deserted by the free and voluntary support of the people."¹ He indeed estimates "the manufacturing interest" at a low rate. "All that a manufacture can do is to offer its productions for the benefit and enjoyment of those who may choose to purchase them."² He strenuously combats the contention that "the very existence of the country depended upon the prosperity and extension" of trade. He denies that commerce has "an original and independent interest"; and no present-day writer ever penned more incisive words in criticising the pretensions of commerce than those which Chalmers wrote. "The only wealth which a manufacturer contributes to the country is his own productions." There must be a desire and need for these; there must also be ability to purchase them, otherwise they are useless. The same "antecedent ability" must also be recognised when dealing with the merits of foreign trade; and if this were kept in view "the overthrow of a thousand prejudices" as to the actual value of foreign trade would be effected.³ To this subject Chalmers, as will be shown, reverted in his volumes on *Political Economy*, and

¹ *Vide op. cit.*, p. 18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

16 EQUIPMENT FOR ECONOMIC WORK

contended that many foreign wars have been most unjustifiably waged in the interests of foreign trade.

But perhaps still more remarkable than even these pronouncements is Chalmers' defence of taxation. He is, as I shall have occasion to point out, all for the adequate taxation of land ; but he also maintains that since protection and security are given to the wealthy, they, whatever the source of their riches, should be taxed according to the amount of their wealth. A tax, he holds, transfers the payment of labourers from a private person to payment by the Government. A tax is not an evil, though many apply objectionable epithets to it. It withdraws luxuries, and gives in their place security.

Chalmers' definition of luxury is worthy of special attention. Luxury is "every enjoyment which is above the general standard of enjoyment among the peasantry."¹ All who are able to live above this standard should, he contends, be taxed whenever the safety of the State and the welfare of its members require a public revenue. "While there is room for economy and retrenchment on the part of individuals, there is room for an augmentation of the public revenue."² "I would survey," he writes, "the splendour and extravagance of the country, and while a single article of retrenchment remained, I would say that the revenue had not arrived at its limits, nor had the nation put forth all its energies."³ Here one cannot resist the reflection that Chalmers' pronouncements are

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

very remarkable, and that a greater debt is due to him than is even yet acknowledged.

2. Further evidence of Chalmers' careful study of economics is found in the great social work which he carried on in St John's Parish, Glasgow. There he applied many of his economic principles, which, it should be remembered, he had elaborated long before he went to Glasgow. He was the first to give a practical illustration of that system which is known as the *Elberfeld*. His social work did not, however, rest so much upon a civic as upon an ecclesiastical basis. Its inspiring motive was distinctively religious. For, by the time that he was minister of St John's Parish he had passed through a great spiritual change. A new world opened to him. The results of his former studies in economics were, however, far from being without use or value. On the contrary, his conceptions of duty were enlarged and clarified; and in nothing else do the sheer greatness and fine insight of Chalmers appear more manifest than in his insistence that the Church, as a powerful organisation, entrusted with the most invaluable of all messages, and inspired by the highest and purest of all motives, should directly undertake social work.

This, it must with regret be confessed, notwithstanding all the honour which is rightly paid to Chalmers' great name, and the definite social work which he performed, she is now only beginning to attempt. The evidence of this new departure is seen in the attention which the General Assembly gives to social questions, and in the eagerness with which students, preparing for

the Christian ministry, and ministers, already in charge of parishes, desire to learn all that can be ascertained respecting the Church's social mission. These are hopeful signs, and show that the Church is now, after the lapse of too many years, attempting to follow the example which the great ecclesiastic set her.

How successfully Chalmers carried on his parochial social experiment is well known. He reduced the annual cost of the support of the poor in a parish of 10,000 people from £1400 to £280. And it is generally recognised that the charity which he administered was not only much more discriminatively, but also more effectively, distributed than the doles handed out under the old and ill-regulated system. He applied *method* to charity, and that was largely the secret of his success.

3. When Chalmers accepted the appointment to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in St Andrews in 1823, one of the strongest motives which induced him to leave the Glasgow pulpit for the professor's chair was the prospect that he might be able to carry on his ethical and economic studies with more leisure and in a more congenial atmosphere. It was his duty as professor to lecture on moral philosophy, but the discharge of this duty did not satisfy Chalmers. He therefore opened a class for the study of economics. Crowds of students attended this class. He took Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* as his text-book. He prepared elaborate notes; and from these he delivered, first in St Andrews and five years later in Edinburgh, a series of lectures on economics. It was from these notes and lectures that his book on *Political Economy* was produced.

Thus was he fitted both by a long period of study and by a fruitful experience to undertake the preparation of an economic work, which he penned *con amore*. His was not a hastily prepared production. It was the outcome of much thought. His conception of the function of moral philosophy as *that* which deals with duty led him at once into the field of economics. In that inviting field moral theories are tested, and their worth is illustrated. Hence economics had for him a special interest; and he was well fitted to expound the science.

But, though Chalmers wrote luminously on economics, the discredit which some economists of his day attempted to attach to his name and work, as an economist, still lingers. One notices with regret that Mr N. Masterman, who has done good service in compiling a volume from Chalmers' economic writings, describes Chalmers' *Political Economy* as "a very unsatisfactory production."¹ He also characterises the phraseology of his writings as "cumbrous." "There are," he says, "peculiarities in his style which make it a laborious undertaking to study many pages at a time."

These, however, are, on Mr Masterman's own showing, inconsistent judgments; for, he exclaims, "what a mine of treasures he has left us in his writings." He also tells us that Chalmers "took no theory for granted," and that he has often said "the very thing that needed to be said in the clearest and most convincing way." He speaks likewise of "the force and precision of his

¹ *Chalmers on Charity*, by N. Masterman, M.A., p. 172. The value of this compilation is greatly impaired by its want of reference to the title and page of Chalmers' works, which are quoted.

20 EQUIPMENT FOR ECONOMIC WORK

utterances," and of phrases "which fix themselves in the memory, and recur to the mind with the ideas that gave them birth."¹ Mr Masterman's misjudgments are really reflections of the adverse opinions expressed by economists in Chalmers' own day. But they are altogether without justification. Mr Masterman's own quotations, and the high praise which he gives to the passages that he quotes, disprove them. It is greatly to be regretted that in his hasty judgment upon Chalmers' *Political Economy* Mr Masterman should have given an entirely wrong account of the origin of the work. He speaks on page 172 of *Political Economy* being Chalmers' answer to trades unionists, whereas he was in favour of trades unions, rightly conducted;² and the work itself was, as I have just shown, the outcome of long years of careful study of the facts and phenomena of social life.

4. But in another direction Chalmers gave proof of his knowledge of economics, and especially of the way in which the science can be made an invaluable aid to a minister in the discharge of his duties. Those discourses, for instance, on *The Application of Christianity to Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life*, which form Volume VI. of his collected writings, are all stamped with an intimate knowledge of ethics and economics. He states quite frankly in his Preface that he deals with "the morality of the actions that are current among people engaged in merchandise." He goes further, and applies economics, inspired by Christian ethics, to all commercial undertakings. He sets out clearly the claims of the Christian Faith, and

¹ *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp. vi-viii.

² See p. 71.

maintains that if Christian ethics were applied to business by all who bear the Christian name, a new standard in commerce would be established. Obedience to this standard, he holds, would soon supplant *that* which sanctions ruthless competition and encourages the eager haste to be rich.

There are many Christian men engaged in business to-day who say that if the new standard were set up, and an attempt made to conform to it, the spirit of enterprise, which is the very essence of business, would be destroyed. This is a common objection. It is repeated in many forms. Chalmers, with singular insight, answered this objection, and that, too, at a time when few gave serious thought to the application of Christian ethics to business affairs.

He was, however, regarded by many as uttering economic heresies, and setting up a wholly Utopian standard. But, despite the taunts of opponents and the indifference of friends, he brought a thorough knowledge of Christian ethics and economic science to business transactions, and examined closely the questions at issue. He perceived quickly what many are now beginning slowly to apprehend, that Christian ethics applied to business makes for a far higher social life than is possible under the reign of severe individualism and unbrotherly competition.

Chalmers, therefore, penned these remarkable and noteworthy words: "In opposition to the maxim, that the spirit of enterprise is the soul of commercial prosperity, do we hold that it is *the excess of this spirit beyond the moderation of the New Testament*, which, pressing on

22 EQUIPMENT FOR ECONOMIC WORK

the natural boundaries of trade, is sure at length to visit any country where it operates with the recoil of those calamities, which in the shape of beggared capitalists, and unemployed operatives, and dreary intervals of bankruptcy and alarm, are observed to follow a season of overdone speculation.”¹ Only an informed economist, who is also certain of his ethics, could thus write. Chalmers’ words embody truths which are confirmed alike by Christian ethics and enlightened economic science.

Proof abundant thus lies to hand that Chalmers did not venture to make hasty pronouncements upon economic questions. Neither did he attempt social experiments ill-equipped and without a clear perception of the issues at stake. He entertained the very highest conceptions as to the value of economics. He therefore gave to the subject a long and patient study. If these things be kept in view it can no longer be surprising that, though his contemporaries did not perceive the value of his economic writings, Chalmers’ name now stands for practical social reforms, and his works on economics as containing most remarkable anticipations of urgently needed measures of social betterment.

¹ Preface to *Commercial Discoverers*, p. vii.

CHAPTER III.

HOW CHALMERS WAS INDUCED TO STUDY ECONOMICS.

I.

IN order to understand how Chalmers devoted himself to the study of economics, when it was by no means either a popular subject, or one that was supposed to lie within the province of clergymen, it is necessary to recall his times and give due weight to the influences which played upon him.

The historical background is indeed all-important when an effort is made to ascertain how it came to pass that Chalmers gave so much attention to economics. He breathed in his early years the atmosphere created by the publications of Condorcet, Godwin, and Malthus. He must, indeed, like other youths of his day, have felt the influence which proceeded from these writings. A direction was thus at an early period of his life given to his thoughts ; and the foundations of his keen interest in economic studies were then also laid. The works of these three representative writers must, therefore, be kept well in view if Chalmers' interest in economics is to be rightly accounted for and explained.

1. The Marquis de Condorcet was, strange to say, like Chalmers, a distinguished mathematician, but his outlook upon life, again like the great ecclesiastic, drove

him to the study of social questions ; and, after long reflection, he reached the conclusion that equality among nations and classes will ultimately be established in trade, wealth, education, etc. He played a conspicuous part in the events which preceded the French Revolution, and also in those which happened while the Reign of Terror was experienced in all its severity. His *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain* exercised a powerful influence upon the minds of his contemporaries. His teachings respecting equality and the growth of the population are plainly reflected in the writings of Godwin : and Malthus, it should be said, made it his special business to refute the arguments which Condorcet had urged.

2. William Godwin, the father-in-law of Shelley, was a notable writer. There can scarcely be any doubt as to the influence which he exercised upon the political thought of his day. Godwin accepted the theories propounded by Rousseau, according to which social evils are mainly due to Governments. He contended for the simplest form of society. Sometimes he declared for a form without government. "Government," he says, "by its very nature counteracts the improvement of original minds."¹ Again he writes : "The subject of property is the keystone that completes the fabric of political justice. According as our ideas respecting it are crude or correct, they will enlighten us as to the consequences of a *simple form of society without government*."² He was also all for reforms without revolution, and for what he termed

¹ *Political Justice*, vol. i. p. x.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 788.

"cultivated equality"; but he was at the same time a thoroughgoing advocate of political freedom.

He took an optimistic view of the products of nature. The world was large; there was plenty for all; and though objections might be taken to his contentions on the ground of the rapid growth of population, he held that a long time must elapse before the evils of over-pressure would be experienced. It was manifestly Godwin's optimistic contentions which Chalmers had in view when he wrote that "though the plough might be carried over the whole of the mighty continent, and should find an obstacle nowhere but at the margin of the sea; yet as sure as every country has its limits, and every continent its shore, we must acquiesce in it as one of the stern necessities of our condition, that the earth we tread upon can only be made to yield a limited produce, and so to sustain a limited population."¹

Godwin embodied his hopes and aspirations in works which were widely read, and must have directly appealed to the young men of Chalmers' day. He published in 1793 *Political Justice*, which was at once accepted as an authoritative statement of the new philosophic radicalism.² In 1794 he gave to the world his famous novel, *The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, about which Hazlitt said that "it could never be begun without being finished." These books had an enormous

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 32.

² Godwin wrote many other books. His first important work was a *Life of Lord Chatham* (1783). He contributed many political articles to the *Political World*. He published *The Inquirer* (1797), a *Life of Chaucer* (1801), *A Treatise on Population*, a reply to Malthus (1820), *History of the Commonwealth of England* (1824-28), *Thoughts on Man* (1833), etc.

circulation, and were widely read. They therefore helped to form public opinion.

The times were opportune for their publication. The spread of reform was making its power felt everywhere. Paris was still the centre of its influence, and its circumference could be traced throughout all European countries. Theories of liberty, equality, and fraternity were accepted by thousands in all lands. But the French Revolution, with all its terrors, supplied only too convincing proof that the advocates of these agencies of social betterment little understood them; and that education had not yet done its needful work by way of preparing the people to use them rightly and effectively.

The French populace were literally driven to excesses by the cruel treatment to which they had been subjected by their rulers. They were but newly awakened to the powerful influences which liberty, equality, and fraternity, as agencies of social reform, might exercise. They were, therefore, like inexperienced youths handling highly complicated instruments, at once useful and also delicate. They could not wisely apply these agencies. They were, indeed, in no sense trained to the right use of them; and, therefore, when they hastily attempted to apply them, they committed the most serious mistakes. All reforms were in consequence thrown back for a time. Even the most ardent reformers had their ardour damped.

Chalmers, like all others of his day, must have been deeply affected by those stirring times. Certainly the politico-economic literature to which the Revolution gave origin told very effectively upon him and his contem-

poraries. They could not, indeed, live and escape its influence. In Chalmers' economic writings we see plainly the reflection of the influence which was then exercised.

But a counteracting power was soon also felt. This proceeded from those writings which were dictated partly by a rigid regard to the facts of social life, and partly by the fears which the French Revolution had awakened. The bright optimistic ideas to which the intellectual leaders of the Revolution had given currency in many well-written volumes were questioned, doubted, and ultimately rejected by those who claimed to interpret life, not by its possible ideals, but by its hard facts.

3. Thomas Robert Malthus represented this counter-acting influence. Godwin and Malthus were representatives in England of these two opposing schools; and if Godwin was fortunate in publishing *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams*, the works by which he is best known, when the tide of reform was still flowing, Malthus, by far his ablest opponent, was equally fortunate in publishing his famous *Essay on the Principles of Population* when the tide of reform was already on the ebb. The first edition of the work appeared in 1798, the second in 1803, and the final and greatly extended edition in 1817.

Now, Malthus carefully and accurately reflected the spirit of his time. Many of his readers, it is true, stood aghast at his startling statements respecting the limits which should be placed on the growth of population; but he succeeded in destroying, at least for a time, the roseate views of those reformers who declared for an

unlimited population and held by the perfectibility of human nature through the efforts of reason alone.

But what is perhaps still more important, he also won many distinguished statesmen and publicists to his own views, and did more than any other person to counteract the influence of those writings by Godwin, which were the occasion, if not also the cause, of the publication of his historic *Essay on Population*. Dr James Bonar has given an interesting description of the elder Malthus discussing by the fireside with his son, Robert, the contents of Godwin's *Inquirer*; and he has settled the question as to the origin of the famous essay.¹

II.

It is now possible to perceive the politico-social ideas which obtained when Chalmers was a young man, and which, acting upon his receptive disposition, made him a life-long student of economics. The times, it should also be remembered, were marked by great distress. The statesmen of the day—Pitt, Burke, and Fox—dealt with this distress very ineffectively. They did not attempt adequate measures of relief, but contented themselves with meagre schemes of redress. Their imperfect remedies for social evils only added to the discontent of the times.

Chalmers could not be an indifferent spectator while social evils abounded, and demanded adequate treatment. It speaks volumes in his praise that he went at once to the root of social evils, and studied with the utmost care all that economics, under the guidance of Christian ethics, has to say and teach. The ineffectiveness of the remedial

¹ See *Malthus and His Work*, by James Bonar, LL.D., pp. 7-8.

measures proposed was apparent to Chalmers. Statesmen made no endeavour to trace social distress to its moral and economic causes. But Chalmers saw clearly that this is the first task which should be undertaken. This task he himself accordingly attempted.

It is now also possible to see the genesis of his interest in all social questions, and the explanation of the method which he applied to them. Not yet was he much concerned about the Church as an ecclesiastical organisation. Not yet even did the great saving message which she is commissioned to make known to all men appeal to him or interest him greatly. At a later date ecclesiastical and religious questions occupied a large part of his time, and found in him a consummately able exponent ; but as yet mathematical studies and economic problems chiefly interested him. As these, therefore, took hold of him at the most formative period in his life, it is not surprising that he never in subsequent years ceased to respond to their claims, even when great ecclesiastical issues made large demands upon his energies and time.

III.

When Chalmers was thus laying the foundations of those studies which ever afterwards held his attention, Malthus was the writer who perhaps exercised the greatest influence upon him. Malthus was scientific in his investigations. Like Chalmers, he had a strong bent for mathematics ; and economics appealed powerfully to both men.

When, therefore, Chalmers was casting about for some explanation of social evils, and especially for some

effective measures of redress, Malthus' *Essay on Population* seemed to him to supply the former and, probably at least, also the latter. He made it accordingly his business to learn all that Malthus had affirmed and taught. But he did not follow him blindly. That was far from a possibility to Chalmers; and he expressly tells us when exception was taken to his *Political Economy* by *The Edinburgh Review*, in an article to which Chalmers replied at great length,¹ that he did not lay, like Malthus, undue stress upon the principle of population; and that he admitted, which Malthus did not,² that there was "a general march and elevation in the style of their enjoyment" on the part of the great masses of the people, which was due to "an opening and augmenting commerce."

But against the reviewer, while recognising "the higher standard of enjoyment" which obtained, he maintained that if working men "live better" they also "labour more."³ Chalmers saw as clearly as any of his contemporaries "the change of habit" which had gradually taken place in modern Europe, but his explanation of the change, and his remedies for social evils, were not identical with those urged by Malthus.

I shall show, in a moment, how far Chalmers surpassed Malthus when the question of checks upon a too rapidly growing population is under discussion.

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. ii. pp. 145-247.

² In his *Essay on Population* Malthus contended that the standard of comfort was not really raised, though he admitted that there was an apparent elevation; but the increased population, he argued, did more than keep pace with the modern powers of production of the necessities of life.—Seventh edit., p. 476.

³ *Political Economy*, vol. ii. pp. 167-8.

Here, however, it should be said that the general position which Malthus laid down as to population was accepted by Chalmers. Like Malthus, too, he affirmed that checks on population are essential, and that these checks belong to the two categories—the *positive* and *preventive*, the former putting an effective check upon the overplus by the vice and misery to which it has given birth; the latter putting moral restraints upon the growth of population.

But Chalmers gave to the question of population a treatment all his own. It is perhaps scarcely fair to compare the two writers, for Malthus was chiefly occupied with supplying proofs of the rate at which population increased.

He had also to adduce evidence in controverting the contentions of Condorcet and Godwin, and he had on hand the still more difficult task of proving how unwise it was to adopt Pitt's practical measure for an increase of the population. That statesman proposed to put a premium upon an increase of the population of the United Kingdom. Malthus resisted this proposal with all his might, and occupied much of his time in supplying additional evidence for the statement that, given abundance of food, the population will increase rapidly in obedience to the operation of a natural law.

In the earlier editions of his *Essay on Population*, Malthus dealt only with the checks, *vice* and *misery*. He showed at great length, and with a wonderful amount of historical illustrations, that these positive checks effectively keep population down to the level of food supplies. But as the years went on Malthus saw more

and more plainly that the forces of order and progress also operate against an overplus of population. Civilisation has, he was ultimately induced to admit, a distinct function which it always discharges. This, therefore, led Malthus to give a prominent place to moral restraints.

This check is preventive, and is far more effective than either of the two positive checks. When Malthus began to note its operations it appealed to him powerfully, and he ultimately therefore laid, as just stated, much stress upon moral restraints. But in his writings he seldom deals with anything save the moral action itself. He does not analyse motives.

Now, it is here that Chalmers surpasses Malthus. He has, it is true, nothing of the credit which belongs to the author of the *Essay on Population*, as one who spent enormous energy and much time in collecting historical proofs in support of his argument; but Chalmers, inheriting the fruit of Malthus' labours, accepted them, and proceeded to examine in great detail the *motives* which operate whenever moral restraints are exercised. Malthus was all for "a mental disposition" in relation to the question of population. Chalmers brought not only the aid of civilisation, but also the light of the high ethics of the Christian Faith, to this question, and insisted that the purest motives which come from a change of mind should be brought into exercise. Again and again, therefore, he maintained that this change of mind is a prime necessity to all social betterment, and is that which supplies the strongest motives to self-restraint. He laid the greatest possible emphasis upon these motives.

He also carefully weighed these motives, and held that, in addition to influencing those who accept the Christian Faith in its entirety, they also told indirectly upon all classes of the community.¹ He gave the chief place to the teachings of our Lord, who did not lay down rules of conduct, but dealt with motives and ideals. When Chalmers was charged with giving undue importance to economics, he took occasion to defend himself, and to show that while Christianity with its Divine solution of man's deepest needs appealed to the individual, not less earnestly did it appeal to communities, and demand the application of its high ethics to commerce, and indeed to all the affairs of common life. To communities as to the individual it brought, he insisted, its purifying and powerful motives. It is his great distinction that he carefully analysed these motives, and supplied abundant evidence of their elevating influence upon society. Under their influence, he maintained, moral restraints become habits of conduct.

Chalmers apprehended clearly the spirit of the times in which he lived. He threw himself with remarkable enthusiasm into all social movements; but he was also careful to weigh the claims of all questions which were raised. He made his own contribution to the solution of these questions, while he also knew intimately all the schemes of reform which his contemporaries outlined and urged. If, then, these things be kept in view, it is comparatively easy to understand why he was induced to give both time and energy to the study of economics.

¹ See *Christian and Civic Economics of Large Towns*, pp. 399, 420.

CHAPTER IV.

CHALMERS' EMINENCE AS AN ECONOMIST.

I.

THE questions which constantly engrossed Chalmers' mind were how to benefit society ; how to effect just and wholesome social relationship ; how to secure for working men just remuneration for their labour and ample leisure for self-improvement ; how to awaken his fellow-men, and especially those who, like himself, accepted the Christian Faith, to an adequate sense of the stupendous moral and social work which lay to their hands ; and how to give wise direction to all who were willing to render social service. It is perhaps not too much to say that Chalmers' fame rests more upon the heroic and painstaking endeavours which he made to realise these objects than upon any other work which he performed.

He was, it is true, a great ecclesiastic. Force of circumstances obliged him to give a large part of his time to ecclesiastical questions. With what devotion and foresight he discharged his obligations has been told at length by former *Chalmers Lecturers*, and is witnessed to by the ecclesiastical organisation which he did so much to frame, at a time when the liberties of the Church of Scotland were threatened by the civil powers. The organisation of the Free Church of Scotland was largely the work of Chalmers.

But the fame of an ecclesiastic, who is *that* and nothing more, is like the fame of a politician. The reflection here is irresistible: *tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*. Ecclesiastics and politicians, when successful, receive the applause of their generation. They soon, however, give place to other men, who come upon the stage and claim attention. New questions, ecclesiastical and political, are indeed always emerging and demanding public notice. Chalmers' services to the Church, as an ecclesiastic, were very great, and can never be entirely forgotten.

But his fame does not rest exclusively upon his ecclesiastical work. It is indeed not improbable that his name will go down to posterity as a great and successful exponent of social life, and that because, both by his economic writings and practical experiments, he dealt effectively with some of the graver problems of social improvement. Like John Ruskin, who once held a supreme place as an art critic, but is now chiefly remembered as a man of keen insight into social phenomena, and as a great social reformer, Thomas Chalmers' name and work will be recalled, because they stand for splendid attempts which were made towards social betterment. The standard of art is ever changing; the ecclesiastical kaleidoscope is ever turning, but social reform and betterment touch all that is deepest and most permanent in society; and therefore men, like Chalmers and Ruskin, who have thrown light, which is of a most illuminating kind, upon social problems, cannot be forgotten.

It should be carefully noted that the principles for

which Ruskin contended in his criticisms of art are identical with those which he applied to economic questions. He was all for honesty, thoroughness, and fidelity to nature. It is manifestly a hasty conclusion that is formed when it is alleged that Ruskin develops new principles in his treatment of economics; and so in all Chalmers' works, whether as a theologian, ecclesiastic, or economist, we see the same spirit and aims, only now they are manifested in one, and now in another department of life's activities.

And, therefore, it has happened that, just as a deeper view of Ruskin's life-work in art criticism and economics obliges one to connect Ruskin's art with his economic teaching respecting the true nature of wealth, as that "which makes for life," in the same way one must regard Chalmers' economic views as in perfect harmony with his theological conceptions of man's relation to God and to his fellow-men. His economic theories are his religious conceptions translated into terms of commerce and social well-being.

But it needs also to be remembered that Chalmers was also a great theologian. His *Institutes of Theology* bear unmistakable evidence of wide reading, clear insight, and accurate generalisations. He relates truth to truth with fine precision. He also allows experience to modify his conclusions, and is, therefore, less rigid than Calvin is in his *Institutes*. He was likewise courageous enough, when the *a priori* method alone was popular, to begin his studies in theology by an examination of the facts and phenomena of human life, and to proceed from these to a reverent treatment of the character and purpose of God.

Had Chalmers done nothing else than write his theological treatises he would be entitled to great honour. To these treatises students will yet be obliged to turn ; for, there is nothing so certain as that theologians are always shifting their ground and changing their standpoints. The critical studies of to-day will exhaust themselves. To the facts of human life, and to the interpretation which Christianity gives of these facts, men will be forced by their concrete needs to return ; and when the return is made, Chalmers' theological writings will be perused with a fresh interest.

II.

Chalmers, however, was more than a great ecclesiastic and theologian : he was also a well-informed and distinguished economist. His eminence consists in his mastery of the science, and in his treatment of it always with a view to social betterment. He did much indeed to revolutionise economics by his insistence upon Christian principles. He certainly elevated and humanised economics, and is therefore entitled to be called an eminent economist.

There is abundant evidence for this claim which is made on his behalf. It is true that the doctrinaire economists did not give a cordial reception to his *Political Economy*. His biographers, Mr James Dodds,¹ Dr Donald Fraser,² Dr Norman Walker,³ Professor

¹ *Thomas Chalmers, a Biographical Study.*

² *Men Worth Remembering Series.*

³ *His Life and its Lessons.*

Blaikie,¹ etc., cite the words quoted by Dr Hanna from the writings of Stuart Mill, who speaks approvingly of the thoroughness and lucidity with which Chalmers treated economic questions; and they all give their readers the impression that Stuart Mill stood alone in appreciating Chalmers.

This is a mistake; for while doctrinaire economists, the followers of Ricardo, treated Chalmers with attempts at superciliousness, and resented his entrance into the economic field, many economists gave him a cordial welcome. Within a few months after the publication of his *Political Economy* eleven important reviews of the work appeared,² and this alone is a testimony to the widespread interest which his economic writings evoked, and to the ability with which he treated his subject. And in addition, the whole school of Malthus, which carried on for a long time a controversy with the school of Ricardo, saw in Chalmers one of the best exponents of political economy. But they welcomed him, not merely for the reason that he on many questions agreed with them, but chiefly because Malthus himself had done much to humanise economics, and had inspired his followers with a liberal spirit. They therefore saw in Chalmers, whose treatment of economics was human and liberal, one who deserved high approbation.

But still further, many who did not accept the Malthusian doctrine recognised the great ability and freshness which Chalmers brought to the study of what he

¹ Famous Scots Series.

² See *Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 148.

called *Political Economy in connection with the Moral State and the Moral Prospects of Society*. He was not a mere exponent of what is good and true in Malthus' *Essay on Population*. He was something more. He was also an exponent of morals; and in applying morals to economic science he illumined it. This is fully and frankly recognised by a writer in the May number of *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1853, to whom I shall have occasion to refer at a later stage.

This writer rejects many of Chalmers' contentions, but he speaks of him, as an economist, in terms of the highest praise. Six years only had elapsed since Chalmers' death, when this writer, reflecting the judgment of a large number of well-informed economists, says that Chalmers' economic productions entitle him to take "a very distinguished rank"; and that "the union in Dr Chalmers of the Christian philanthropist with the political economist is that to which we at once point as a pre-eminent distinction. He is not the first or only instance of such a combination, but in our own days he has been the most conspicuous example of it . . . He was the first to carry the banner of Christianity into the very heart of the citadel, to claim the intellectual territory also as a fief of the Holy Church" And he adds, that Chalmers "has done what lay in one man to Christianise the science."

Evidence is thus abundantly supplied that Chalmers earned by his economic writings and his social service the distinction, which is now by many accorded to him, when he is spoken of as an eminent economist.

III.

Chalmers did not write so extensively upon economics as upon theological and ecclesiastical questions. In this respect he is, again, like Ruskin, whose writings on economics when compared with those which he wrote on art are relatively small. It is not always a disadvantage when one writes little upon a given subject; it is the quality and not the amount which counts. Chalmers was a voluminous writer on many subjects, but his actual writings on economics are also relatively small.

They deal, however, with what is most vital in economic science. His pronouncements, for instance, on taxation, on rent, and on economics, as inspired by Christian principles, have not yet been excelled by any writer. He goes direct to the essence of these questions; and though the reader may peruse what is written upon them in a short time, he cannot give the weighty utterances the attention which they deserve without rising from the perusal with clear and distinct ideas respecting the great value of the opinions which Chalmers holds, and of the judgments he pronounces.

Chalmers' capacity for work was extraordinary. His interests were as wide as life itself. Whatever affected man's well-being had for him a special fascination. There are, indeed, few men, who are entitled to be called great Churchmen, that have made better use of their time and endowments than he made of his days and gifts.

Chalmers' life is thus an example, and also an in-

spiration, to all ministers of the Gospel. There is perhaps no class of professional men who have so much time at their own disposal as the clergy. No outsider has the means of judging them as to how they pass their time, though it soon becomes apparent from the character of the work which they attempt whether they are making conscience of it or not. But here deception is not impossible, for some under the guise of sanctity can deceive even the elect. It is, therefore, imperative that, like Chalmers, ministers should make conscience of their time and work. The lazy are seldom watchful of their spiritual life. The mentally indolent are the last to give to their life a well-directed activity. The great task of social betterment is never to them a heavy burden.

IV.

It greatly enhances one's estimate of Chalmers' work to learn that when most deeply engaged in the study of economic questions he found time for the cultivation of his inner life. His *Journal*, indeed, gives ample evidence that when he was immersed in the study of economics he was also in the finest spiritual frame of mind. Political economy was to him neither an abstract subject nor an idle speculation. It was absorbingly interesting, because it bore directly upon social life, and made for those conditions under which mental and moral improvement are greatly facilitated.

Chalmers attached much importance to methodised philanthropy. Those, however, who limit their attention to the great service which he rendered by insisting upon

charity, governed by method, are far from doing him full justice. They overlook his contributions to Christian economics, upon which he set such great store. Chalmers himself, it is true, sometimes wrote, as will be seen when an examination is made of his teachings on methodised charity,¹ as if well-directed benevolence were almost all that is required for the removal of poverty. But his own thorough treatment of economic problems, and the practical reforms which he insisted Parliament should effect, prove conclusively that charity alone is not sufficient.

To-day there is no more urgent duty, which all who aim at social betterment must attempt to discharge, than that of studying closely the facts of social life and the operations of economic laws. Philanthropy alone cannot root out social evils. Well-administered doles of charity may do much good, but they are far from being all that is required. It is not enough simply to appeal to the benevolent. Social evils cannot even legitimately be made mere subjects for the flights of the imagination of the popular orator, who employs his rhetoric to excite the feelings of his audience, and leaves out of account the whole economic order of things. It is, therefore, rightly contended that a thorough and scientific treatment of the moral and economic causes which produce social distress is a necessity.

This is, indeed, imperative. Fortunately, the phenomena of social life can be studied, classified, and also co-ordinated. The scientific method of investigation can be applied to them. Their origin and direction can be traced; and when moral and economic

¹ *Vide* pp. 360-2.

causes are carefully investigated, it is soon seen that social evils are not essential to the existence of society.

But many treat them as if they were essential, and as if remedies were impossible. "Is not poverty," they triumphantly ask, "to be always with us? and have we not the highest authority for saying that it shall always exist?" Those who put these questions usually misquote our Lord's words, "the poor ye have always with you," and render them "the poor ye shall always have with you." They, too, wrest the words from their historical setting, and import into them a meaning which they do not bear. They do not take time to reflect upon the special charge which Jesus brought against Judas Iscariot, who, under the pretence of caring for the poor, objected to Mary of Bethany when, out of the wealth of the gratitude of an affectionate heart, she poured on the feet of Christ the costly ointment of spikenard. How harsh is his question, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" How he also calculates the exact price of the ointment! If sold, and not wasted, it would have brought three hundred pence! His care for the poor is all-consuming, but as to affection for his Master, of that he has none.

The comment of the Evangelist explains at once Judas' conduct: "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bore what was put therein." He neglected Christ under the pretext of caring for the poor. He had not his Master, and what he owed to Him, always present to his mind; but the poor he pretended to have near to his heart: and, therefore, the reproving and spirit-revealing

words, "The poor always ye have with you ; but Me ye have not always." The reproof is addressed to Judas. The words cannot, therefore, be taken as a justification for maintaining that the poor must always be with us.

The clearest-sighted reformers of to-day believe strongly in the possibility of the removal of poverty. "That poverty is not a condition to be acquiesced in," says Mr C. F. G. Masterman, "but a disease to be fought against, is a discovery of quite modern days."¹ We are as yet only "at the earliest empirical stages" of this discovery ; but "the new spirit is slowly elaborating a knowledge of the disease itself—its nature, the conditions which make for its multiplication, the environment which is favourable or unfavourable for its progress. This work is only in its infancy. It proceeds with difficulty, and under comparative neglect." The disease is, however, being scientifically investigated, and, continues Mr Masterman, "with the elaboration and completion of this scientific diagnosis is bound up all the future hope of the world."

It is rightly claimed for Chalmers that he was among the first to attack poverty systematically. He aimed at more than mere relief from distress. The whole design of his splendid effort in St John's Parish was to dry up the springs of pauperism. He set an example which many have followed. His system was the original of the Elberfeld method. He appealed to the sense of independence, which, he held, was strong even in the poorest, if not destroyed by indiscriminate relief. "Help the poor to help themselves" was his well-known formula.

¹ *The Albany Review*, February 1908.

In his great social experiment he engaged the services of citizens as such help-givers. These were sent to find out the poor who deserved help, as well as those who under the force of temptation had fallen into evil ways and were already among the criminal classes.

Not the least of the benefits which his method of assailing poverty carried with it was the privilege conferred on those who engaged in this social work. They were brought into personal contact with the conditions under which the poor live and try to eke out a livelihood.

Germany, it is well known, has adopted Chalmers' system. Daniel von der Heydt, who is said to have found, in Jethro's advice to Moses, confirmation of the Elberfeld method, was the first to apply it in that country. Since his time it has been put to the test of an experience, which has been singularly beneficial and fruitful of good, in Berlin, Frankfurt, Mainz, Hamburg, and many other cities. It is worthy of note that all who administer the system in Germany speak of it in terms of the highest praise. Witness the annual reports of men like Dr Cäcker, the chief of the statistical bureau in Berlin.

But when the excellent service which Chalmers rendered by his systematic method of remedying the evils of poverty is fully acknowledged, it still needs to be said that he only mitigated these evils and did not dry up their spring. He himself, as already stated, is witness in his economic writings that social evils must be traced to their moral and economic source. He judged it, therefore, worthy his best efforts to endeavour to understand the conditions under which the great mass

of the people pass their lives, and also the economic improvements which are possible.

He did not, however, commit the mistake of assuming that economics alone can effect a permanent social betterment; and therefore he insisted that morals should receive the closest attention. The moral and economic, in Chalmers' judgment, go together, and should never be separated. He took both, therefore, into his service as agents which guarantee individual and social elevation.

V

How far he was led by the economic principles which, after careful examination of their merits, he had accepted, is seen from his own writings. He was a man with strong conservative instincts, and was therefore inclined to uphold all political, social, and ecclesiastical institutions which had existed for many years, simply because they had endured for a long time. But he was also a man who gave himself to the impartial study of principles. This study led him to adopt positions which were often antagonistic to many old institutions. Whenever a principle was clear to himself, he proceeded at once to adduce reasons for its application, even though this might entail drastic changes on organisations and customs long in existence.

Whoever cares to reflect will see in this an explanation of the often apparently contradictory parts which he played in public life, as when, for instance, he strongly defended an Established Church and yet led the

Disruption. His actions were always dictated by principles, and he was always true to the light which he enjoyed.

The same fidelity becomes manifest when an examination is made of the positions he adopted in relation to methods and agencies of social betterment. Here, indeed, is witnessed, in a striking manner, the conflict between conservative instincts and the claims of principles. In the conflict he always declared for principles. This declaration led him to make many very remarkable pronouncements and far-sighted anticipations. Thus, it is acknowledged that he was among the first to relate ethics to economics, to give to economic science a wider outlook and a deeper human interest, and to apply *method* to charity—an anticipation this of the modern scientific spirit; that he was among the first to insist that the resources of the country are sufficient for the support of a well-regulated population, and to advocate the adoption of a properly graduated Income Tax; and also that he was among the first to point out the Church's function as a mighty moral force making for social righteousness, and to indicate to ministers of the Gospel the invaluable aid which the study of economics gives to them in the discharge of their duties.

But he made, as will be seen, other remarkable pronouncements and anticipations. He declared for the taxation of land, and that to an amount which only the more advanced economists advocate. He made plain the grave mistakes which economists commit when they contend for and are content with mere systems of economic truths. He likewise anticipated in a wonderfully luminous

essay¹ those who to-day maintain that instruction should be given in economic science to pupils in the advanced classes of the day schools, and thus be prepared for the important civic duties of life. He was also among the first to make an analysis of motives in dealing with the influence of character on social betterment, and to emphasise the claims of society as well as those of the individual—a conception to which idealism now gives the greatest prominence. He, indeed, liberated individualism from bondage in relation to politics, commerce and religion. And the value of the insight of his anticipations may be perceived when it is further said that he anticipated Ruskin by declaring that wealth is *that* which sustains life ;² Professor Marshall³ by affirming that economic science deals with man as well as with money ; and Bishop Westcott⁴ and the large number of clergy who now insist upon the importance of economic teaching.

These remarkable pronouncements and anticipations are found in his economic writings. It is well known that his contemporaries did not appreciate his contributions to economic science. Some denied his claim to speak as an economist. Others, without taking the trouble to examine the reasons which he adduced for his pronouncements and anticipations, did not hesitate to cast discredit upon his work. The explanation of these hostile attitudes towards him is largely found in this, that he was far in advance of his time ; and the majority of his opponents were either not sufficiently in touch

¹ See pp. 67-8.

³ P. 305.

² See pp. 305-6.

⁴ P. 304.

with the extreme poverty of masses of the people or inadequately educated to appreciate his conclusions.

But since his time a process of education has gone on rapidly. To-day the numbers cannot be counted who, perhaps without being aware of the debt of gratitude which they owe to him, advocate social reforms which he was among the first to commend and urge. It is not necessary to subscribe to all that Chalmers taught; but the honour which he deserves is paid to him when his pronouncements and anticipations are examined on their merits. There are, however, few things in his economic writings from which one is obliged to dissent; and it may be affirmed that as the years go on the value of his economic work will become more and more apparent, and the obligation under which he has placed posterity, not only as a great ecclesiastic, but also as an eminent economist, will be widely and willingly acknowledged.

CHAPTER V.

THE SOCIAL IDEAL : ITS CLAIMS FOR CONSIDERATION.

I.

A CONSIDERABLE space of time intervenes between the present and Chalmers' day. In the interval many old social questions have become very acute, and now urgently call for a solution. But new social problems have also emerged, and these equally demand attention. This condition of things amply justifies an endeavour to ascertain the *claims* of the social ideal for consideration, and also an attempt to examine the *ideal itself*, towards which all social schemes and social work are directed.

For the same reason the *agencies* by means of which the social ideal may be realised should also be carefully examined. Nothing but good can ensue from an investigation of the past and present operations of social agencies. These operations can be observed, and if account be taken of the *end* for which social agencies are presumably employed, the value of a careful observation of their operations becomes at once evident.

This double task should be undertaken in the interests not only of the individual, but especially of society. When so undertaken, however, the good of the individual is seen to be thereby secured, for it is through society that he realises his life.

It is a great advantage when one is able to perceive with more or less clearness the *purpose* which runs through and governs social life ; and when one is also able to ascertain the agencies by means of which effect is given to that purpose. If, for instance, the social ideal, towards which all agencies of social betterment are directed, be even in some measure apprehended, the element of haphazard, so prominent in many present-day social schemes, will to a great extent be eliminated and intelligence play a rightful part in social development. A clear view of the social *end* always reacts upon the means for its attainment, and obliges those who seek it to employ adequate agencies.

But at the outset it should be noted with care that the social ideal itself cannot yet be adequately defined. I do not, therefore, here or elsewhere, attempt a definition. A description of the social ideal can only be offered. I hope, however, that as the discussion proceeds the final object of all social endeavours will become more and more manifest as *that* about which one can think, and for the realisation of which one can strive.

For society is slowly moving, with occasional retrogressions caused by lack of insight and selfishness on the part of men, towards an ideal state ; but the ideal, I repeat, can only be described.¹ It cannot be defined in terms which all will accept, and that because it is the realisation of ideas. It is these ideas coming to fruition ; it is spirit expressing itself in outward actions, in institutions, and in organisations.

¹ See pp. 54 and 127.

Institutions and organisations must not, however, be taken as synonymous with the social ideal. They are very far indeed from being identical with it. They are only its agencies, and the ideal may find now one and now another agency through which to express itself.

II.

Great care must, therefore, be taken lest the agencies of the ideal be made identical with the ideal itself. This care is, unfortunately, not always exercised. Thus, the realisation of what is popularly known as socialism and the realisation of the social ideal are sometimes regarded as one and the same thing. But socialism is almost always taken as meaning, and only as meaning, the possession by the State, on behalf of the people, of all means of production, exchange, and distribution. This, however, is only one way or method by which the ideas, that are of the very essence of the social ideal, may be expressed, and the ideas themselves be realised. Other ways and methods may be possible. Since, indeed, the ideas have moral content, material things, such as the production and distribution of commodities, cannot adequately express them. Besides, the moral always makes its claims on the individual ; and individualism as well as socialism must therefore play a large part in the realisation of the social ideal. The conclusion is, therefore, irresistible that no mere economic agency, however effective, can be legitimately taken as the entire and perfect expression of all that belongs to the social ideal.

Institutions and organisations are always changing.

Experience of their operations often suggests modifications, and sometimes, indeed, the transformation of them. Here the old order changes and gives place to the new ; but whatever agencies may be adopted, they must always be subservient to an *end*, and must never be confounded with it. Some people pin themselves down to one set of agencies, and can see little or no good in those of which others approve. But all organisations, even the very best, have a tendency to lose the ideas which originally inspired them ; and, therefore, too much stress should not be laid upon them.

Ideas create their own agencies, which may contain apparent contradictions, like those, for instance, which seem to exist between individualism and socialism. But there is a profound unifying principle in social life, deeper and stronger than all apparent differences. This principle possesses the inherent power of reconciling these differences, and it is ever making for a common end. The principle may be expressed in terms of "the Good," and the worth of all social institutions and organisations may be tested according as they make for the good of the whole community, *the State*, and also for the good of the whole world, *mankind*.

III.

It is not, therefore, surprising that no single formula can express the entire content of the social ideal. The operations of the spirit, of which it is the crown and completion, are at once multiplex and complex. The very fulness and complexity of these operations, indeed, make definition impossible, and also render the attain-

ment of the ideal a long, slow process, demanding both energy and patience.

But though the social ideal eludes definition, we know enough respecting it to be able to make certain affirmations. It is known, for instance, that each part of social life is related to the whole, as the particular is to the universal; and that each part fulfils its functions only as it makes for the perfection of the whole. Defects of the parts tell adversely upon the whole. No part of the social organism can, therefore, be neglected with impunity.

It is known, again, that since the realisation of the social ideal depends upon individual as well as upon collective efforts, each person must have a fair field and opportunities of making a contribution to social betterment. Service is the law of all right social living; but the conditions must be provided in which service can be rendered.

The recognition of these elementary truths at once carries with it the necessity for discountenancing all monopolies of land, and place, and power. Every *plus* implies a *minus*. Where *pluses* obtain, injustice is done and sufferings are entailed.¹ Besides, those who are subjected to injustice and sufferings cannot fully discharge their obligations to their fellows. This discharge of duty is imperative. Their fellows have a claim upon them. They need them, otherwise their lives are necessarily imperfect. The claims and the place of the individual in society are thus emphasised.

But emphasis is thrice underlined when the position

¹ See Ruskin's "*Unto This Last*," p. 131.

of those who possess monopolies is examined. They cannot discharge *their* obligations, and that because they hold and control monopolies which they do not use in the interests of society. Others have a legitimate claim upon the products of these monopolies, which, however, must not be wrested from their present holders by force, but should be willingly conceded by them.

It cannot be insisted upon too strongly, even at the beginning of these investigations, that monopolies of land, and place, and power are barriers to social betterment. If those who hold them persist in retaining them, they prevent others from rendering the service to the community which it requires, while they themselves assume responsibilities which they cannot discharge. They take upon themselves burdens at once too great and too heavy for them to bear. So long as this economic condition of things exists, it cannot be but that social evils will flourish.

IV.

The rule, sanctioned by the highest ethics, and also by the teachings of the clearest-sighted economists, which should obtain in social life is, service from all according to their capacity to all according to their need. This rule finds abundant justification in Christian ethics. The Christian Faith enforces the duty of social service. Each follower of Christ must, like the Master Himself, do good wherever he finds a sphere of labour; and when service is rendered he returns his

talents with the increase which comes from the right use of them.

It follows from this high rule that no one who is willing to work and to render service should be deprived of the opportunity and means of working and rendering service. This is urged not only because each one should earn his livelihood, but also because society suffers if work be not done and service be not rendered by all. The right to work is a question which is raised and pressed at the present time. It may, therefore, be useful to consider for a moment on what grounds it rests.

If in one aspect the claim may be urged as a right, in another and still more important aspect it may be treated as a duty, for the discharge of which provision should be made. Anyone who is acquainted with the working classes also knows that the great majority of them are eager to work, and are thankful for the opportunity of earning an honest livelihood. They have no sympathy with, and show little respect for, the loafer. They altogether endorse the apostolic pronouncement that the idler, if he will not work, whether he belong to the higher or lower social circle, neither should he eat. The right to work carries with it the duty to work. All who are unwilling should be forced. The German system of dealing with the loafer, or some similar system, should be adopted.

It may, I am aware, be argued that neither the State nor industry is at present so organised as to be able to make provision for the unemployed, and that drastic change on the land and industrial systems is a

first necessity. That there is much in favour of this contention is beyond dispute; but even under present conditions the State, with great benefit to itself, might place larger sums of money at the disposal of municipalities than those which it now gives to them. The State and municipalities might also with great advantage co-ordinate their efforts to provide work for all willing to labour. Employers, too, might co-operate with these authorities. An insurance policy, which laid the cost of keeping a waiting margin of workers upon each trade, masters and workmen alike contributing to it, might, in addition, be imposed by Parliament.

In thus carrying out comprehensive measures with the object of giving employment to all willing to work, the Government could not be charged with illegitimately contradicting the right which everyone has to the product of one's labour. That right is fully recognised, but under definite conditions. At the present time the whole product of labour is not in any case reaped; for all are taxed, directly or indirectly. If the State protects capital and labour, and provides both with safe conditions of employment, it can, and does, with the consent of all, impose taxation. If, then, it be in the interests of the State to impose additional taxation and provide work for the unemployed, objections to its action will not hold, unless its right to care for its own interests be denied. Where so many rights are involved it is, therefore, useful also to look at duties not only of the individual, but also of the State.

This is a moral as well as an economic question, and both ethical and economic arguments are on the side of

the right and duty to work. It is not either morally or economically defensible to argue that no one has a right to State assistance, and that if relief be given it must be on the grounds of charity. Those who thus argue frankly recognise that the State is bound to see that none of its members starve. Wherein lies this obligation? It cannot be looked for in the domain of charity, for charity is not the basis of State obligations. If the State be bound to see that none of its members starve, and if, at the same time, it be contended that no one has a right to State aid, say, in the form of employment, which prevents starvation, an acknowledged duty is circumscribed, and is limited to those acts which assume the form and guise of charity. But State duties do not rest exclusively upon humanitarianism. The State is not a philanthropic body. It has definite obligations to discharge. It must care for the interests of all its members. It must also care for its own interests, and do everything possible to make workmen physically fit. Its own stability depends upon a healthy and contented people.

In the last resort, therefore, the right or duty to work rests upon the welfare of the State and the well-being of its members. The truth which Plato¹ long ago perceived must never indeed be overlooked, that the State is just what the people in it are. If some be lacking in moral insight, and become lazy, or grasping and greedy, the whole community suffers. But the interests of the social whole are paramount. Lack of moral insight as to these interests is at the root of most evils, individual and social.

¹ See his *Republic*, Book IV., sect. 435, where he argues that defects in the individual reflect themselves in the State.

These evils require, first of all, moral remedies. Next, economic agencies must be employed to eradicate them.

V.

Since then moral and economic remedies are both required a very superficial view is adopted when social evils are attributed to economic causes alone, or when it is assumed that economic agencies alone can remove them. The moral always lies behind the economic, and a beginning must therefore be made with moral issues. A false and almost irretrievable step is taken when attention is exclusively directed to one agency alone, be it moral or economic.

This is, however, what many who are profoundly anxious to remove all social evils are doing. The great blot, for instance, on the work of Karl Marx, and on that of many of his followers, is that he traced, and they still trace, all moral and social evils to the material conditions of life, and to the methods of production which have hitherto obtained. It is claimed for Marx that he gave to the materialistic conception of history a comprehensive formula ; and his stricter disciples, following his example, interpret all class distinctions, and the evils which ensue from them, in terms of economic motives and ends.

That Marx rendered invaluable service by faithfully depicting and thereby condemning, as he does in his *Das Kapital*, the unbrotherly and often fierce struggle on the part of capitalists to seize the surplus-value of labour, must be frankly admitted. He has indeed in this rendered great service ; but in tracing all evils to economic causes,

and in looking for their removal to economic remedies alone, he has given an altogether inadequate interpretation of social life, and has misled many of his followers to their own and society's great loss.

But if he made this mistake there is painful evidence of others, who also profess a passionate desire for the removal of social evils, going to the opposite extreme and deliberately scouting economics. These are all for what they term "spiritual work," not perceiving that all legitimate work is sacred, and should be discharged in a religious spirit. These can co-operate without scruple in their spiritual work with men who daily violate almost every sound economic principle, and grind down their workmen to starvation wages. Some of these men grow rich beyond even the dreams of avarice, and yet persuade themselves that they are fit subjects for the kingdom of God. These are the men for whom, when they die, we hasten to build tombs to-day: they share a better fate than the prophets; they do not require to wait for a dilatory posterity to do them honour. It is this whole condition of things which creates resentment and discontent.

The wise will look for the real causes and effective remedies of social evils in ethics and economics. No writer in his day saw, and scarcely any one since his time has seen more clearly than Chalmers, the close relation between moral elevation and economic welfare. He gave to this relationship a most careful study. He called it "a great question which of these has the precedence, not in order of time, for they might," he said, "begin and proceed onward contemporaneously; but

which of these two has the precedence in the order of influence, or in the order of cause and effect.”¹ He reached the conclusion that the moral takes precedence of the economic, and that “through the medium of popular intelligence and work a great and stable advancement” in social betterment takes place.

To this subject Chalmers constantly reverts. He never entirely loses sight of it. To his conception of the bearing of Christian education and ethics upon all economic questions, it is eminently needful at the present time to return. Not otherwise can adequate justice be done to the unity of human life and to all the elements which make for the transformation of society. Not otherwise can progress towards the social ideal be made.

The claims of this ideal for consideration are, in view of the objects after which all social reformers strive, quite apparent. They must be examined and weighed in order that intelligence and sympathy may play their legitimate part in all efforts which are made for the realisation of the social ideal.

¹ See Preface to *Tracts and Essays*, p. vi.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SOCIAL IDEAL : IS IT RECEIVING SCIENTIFIC TREATMENT ?

I.

IN dealing with the question of the realisation of the social ideal there are two urgent and important questions which deserve special attention. These questions meet us on the threshold of our investigations. They are constantly being raised again and again by those who do not hesitate to express their doubts as to there being any ideal of social life and as to the value of any agencies which may be employed to reach the ideal.

“Is there really a science of society?” is the first question : and next it is repeatedly asked, “Have the facts of social life ever received, or are they at the present time receiving, a scientific treatment?”

To attempt an answer to these questions is neither an idle inquiry, nor a useless task. The questions are not only initial, but also essential. They raise issues of the greatest magnitude, which cannot be neglected by anyone who is constrained by the concrete needs of the poor to study the problems of social life. The answer returned to these two questions must be strictly and only such as the facts of social life, and the history of social endeavours, warrant. The answer itself, when obtained,

should be used for the purpose of ascertaining what light is thrown upon the nature and content of the social ideal, and also upon all social agencies.

Now, there are those who maintain that a science of society is an impossibility; and others who hold that the study of society has not yet been approached in a scientific manner. It is necessary to the right understanding of the social ideal that special attention should be devoted to these contentions. This must also be done at once. The first contention that a science of society is impossible, rests on the assumption that the data of social life cannot be collected, examined, and classified. If the formation of society were an accident there might be some show of reason for saying that society cannot be submitted to an orderly treatment. But the formation is not accidental; for, people occupy a defined territory, live together, and pursue common objects in obedience to the demands of well-known social laws. Professor Adam Ferguson, the intimate friend of Sir Walter Scott, in his famous *Essay on the History of Civil Society*; Sir Henry Maine, in his *Ancient Law*, and many recent writers have outlined these laws.

If, therefore, communities be governed by ascertained principles of social action, it must be possible to trace the operation of these principles, and to offer a scientific interpretation of society. The task may be difficult, and the utmost care must be taken in making inductions from collected data; but neither of these things can be regarded as insuperable obstacles to the formation of a science of society.

II.

To what extent justification can be found for the second contention, that the study of society has not been carried on in a scientific spirit, is another and a different question. This question, indeed, demands a detailed answer; for, as one proceeds to examine it, one finds that while the contention, as stated, cannot be substantiated, yet it brings into the light grave aspects of social life, the consideration of which presents the strongest possible arguments for giving earnest and enlightened attention to the social ideal.

It is, as I shall show, the lack of adequate conceptions of this ideal which largely explains the existence of many social evils, the haphazard treatment which is given to these evils, and the struggles of the great masses of working men, who have been driven, often blindly, to hastily-formed methods of self-defence. The same lack also accounts for the undue haste to amass riches on the part of many, and for the ruthless competition of the day.

Those who urge the contention that the scientific spirit is absent do not, it should be noted, maintain that a science of society is impossible. The form in which their objections are couched, indeed, rather assumes the possibility, and even the desirability, of a science of social life. All that they contend for is, that the scientific method has not been applied to the investigation of the facts of social life. It must be said that their contention is urged somewhat loosely, for they do not take

sufficient notice of the labours of the large number of sociologists who have attempted an explanation of society in a scientific manner. Fourier and Louis Blanc, Lassalle and Comte, Marx and Engels, Spencer and Wallace, Hobhouse and Westermarck, Booth and Rown-tree have all claimed the scientific method in their interpretation of social life. Their respective postulates may be wrong ; but it cannot be contended by anyone that these writers have failed to recognise the claims of strictly scientific investigation.

The proofs of the presence of the scientific spirit lie to hand. Informed sociologists, for instance, have deliberately approached the study of society by making a searching examination of anthropology and economics. They have also made it their special business to read political and economic history with care, and to observe how economic theory tells upon practice. Many of them, again, have clearly perceived that all economic theories are ultimately based upon moral principles, and that these principles reflect themselves in the economics of the market-place. Some have proceeded further, and have seen that the ethical theories which are chosen and advocated are reflections of the interpretation which is made of mental states. In their view the study of psychology precedes that of morals.

These sociologists have thus attempted to do justice to the unity of social life. It cannot, therefore, be maintained that they have not given scope, adequate and sufficient, to the scientific spirit in their investigations. It may be added that when one examines the earnest endeavours which all of them have made to understand

social relationships, and the definite schemes which some of them have formulated for the betterment of social life, it is difficult not to admire their far-reaching remedial measures.

In making this acknowledgment of the character of the work of informed sociologists, one does not require to assent to all their theories. Their interpretation of society and their schemes for its improvement may require to be examined and re-examined in the light of experience. It is not improbable, for instance, that individualism may successfully assert, even to the satisfaction of socialists, whatever legitimate claims belong to it, and may thereby modify socialistic theories. I am not, however, meanwhile discussing the relative merits of individualism and socialism. I am only adducing proof for the statement, that in many conspicuous instances the scientific spirit has been applied to the study of society. The claims of the social ideal for thoughtful consideration and scientific treatment have obliged sociologists, who understand their task, thus to attempt its discharge.

Instead, however, of making the above denial, it would be better and far more correct to say that many endeavours have been made to study social relationships and social life in a scientific manner, but that, unfortunately, along with these endeavours, much social work has been impulsively undertaken, and performed in a most inadequate manner. This grave fact must not be overlooked. Many schemes, which cannot stand impartial investigation, have been propounded, with the result that confusion stamps itself upon innumerable social efforts.

III.

This regrettable circumstance can, however, be easily explained.

1. Suffering is the lot of great masses of the people. Many of them live in the most abject poverty. They try to eke out a livelihood, and can scarcely succeed. When, therefore, the impassioned, but ill-informed, appeal to them, it is not surprising that they should hastily seize any and every proposal which offers them even a small measure of relief, and the hope of better things.

2. Besides, public education has not been specially directed towards social improvement. It makes pupils experts at answering questions and passing examinations. The now almost exploded German system of instruction and of examinations has been followed all too faithfully. Little attention has been given to citizenship and the social duties which all good citizens should discharge. When, therefore, these youths reach manhood, it cannot be matter for astonishment that they are ill-prepared to examine and weigh social schemes which are offered for their acceptance.

It is idle to hope for a proper sifting of proffered social schemes unless our public instruction concerns itself with social subjects, and trains pupils of the more advanced classes in relation to them. In his day there was no more enlightened educationist than Chalmers. He was all for social instruction. He contended that economics should be taught in the day schools, and that if such instruction were given it would prepare pupils

for the right discharge of public duties.¹ Within recent times this subject has received some attention. Mr Acland, when Minister of Education, placed *citizenship* in the evening Continuation Classes, and Lord Pentland, the Secretary for Scotland, in a Circular issued in August 1909, invited the Scottish School Boards to consider the claims of social instruction. But the subject still waits for a more definite treatment at the hands of educationists. If this be not given, ill-considered schemes of social betterment will continue to command the adherence of the great masses. The claims of the social ideal for consideration emphasise the need of instruction in social subjects in the higher classes of our public schools.

3. But note must also be taken of the competition of the day, which is becoming ever keener and keener, and more and more cruel. The effects of competition are seen in many directions. They are painfully manifest in the manner in which labour is bought in the cheapest market, irrespective of the service which it renders; in underselling; in the extent to which "sweating" prevails; and also in the hastily-formed methods and schemes which are designed to correct these evil effects. Never, perhaps, at any previous period was competition so keen as it is to-day. Private greed is rapidly increasing, and is stimulated by the very fervour of competition. This fervour, it is true, ministers to social activities, which, again, make for wealth in greater and greater degree. But few will contend that this production of wealth is elevating the social life of the

¹ *Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation*, vol. iii. p. 111. This subject is treated in detail in my *Education and Social Life*, pp. 168-9 (Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons)

nations in which it is created, or that encouragement is thereby given to examine social life in a calm, impartial spirit. The haste to be rich kills social endeavours, while it is, at the same time, all for the material and the vulgar. Under its régime even physical science receives little encouragement, unless in so far as it discovers further sources of wealth ; and, I may add, social science receives no encouragement at all.

IV.

The conclusion, then, to which one is obliged to come is that the extreme poverty of tens of thousands ; the absence of social instruction ; and the presence of heartless competition have created a state of society which presents perplexing social questions. This state of society awakens sympathy ; but it also demands careful scientific treatment. As thoughtful men ponder over the present state of society, the morally élite among them say, and that too with emphasis, that it cannot be allowed to continue for ever. They perceive more or less distinctly the social ideal, and find in the present conditions of society the most powerful arguments, both for earnest attention being given to it, and for efforts being made to reach it. Hence the vast literature on this subject, and the eager desire on the part of many to discover a solution of social ills. The social ideal thus claims and receives consideration.

But when one turns to the masses of toilers and asks, How do they act under these conditions of modern social

life? Until within the last few years the only method of redress which working men attempted was the formation of protective societies. *That* was the utmost which they in their desperation could devise. These societies were defensive organisations and nothing else. Few exhibited evidence of having been formed on broad sociological principles. The toilers, driven by forces which they could not analyse or even understand, hastily adopted methods of self-defence. The right to employ these methods of defence has been purchased at a great cost. The history of Trades Unions is a record of fierce conflicts between masters and workmen.

Now, whatever final judgment may be pronounced upon these methods, it is beyond controversy that they have, in some degree, counteracted the evil influences of ruthless competition. They have protected the defenceless, and have narrowed the industrial fields wherein private greed seeks only its own gains. Private enterprise is, however, not greatly contracted or lessened, but it is not permitted to operate without some regard to the claims of the toilers. The defensive associations called into existence, often hurriedly and without perhaps much consideration, have therefore partially limited severely individualistic enterprises.

These organisations have thus served a definite purpose; but whether they are altogether justifiable, or the best that could be devised, is a question respecting which difference of opinion may obtain. This, however, is certain, that few of them have been adopted after a thorough investigation of the data of social life, and of the possible political and economic agencies which might be employed

for social betterment ; and that some of them carry with them hardships, which cannot be easily justified, to those who do not join the organisations. For the most part these organisations have been chosen as the agencies which lay readiest to hand. The reflection here is obvious : methods due to haphazard efforts are seldom either permanently useful or effective.

Chalmers saw this whole question in its true perspective at a time when there were few to advocate the removal of the legal restrictions on trade combinations. Canning entered into office in 1822, and Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade, repealed the stringent laws against Trades Unions. Under mistaken ideas of the liberty which Parliament granted, workmen misused for a time their right to combine, and threatened with violence those of their fellow-workmen who continued at work during periods of strikes. This led to riots, and a loud demand was made for the re-enactment of the old restrictions. Chalmers was one of the most powerful mediating influences between opposing parties. He argued for the freedom both of combination and also of the individual,¹ and thus rendered great service.

V.

But it must also be said that it is not only workmen who have acted in a haphazard manner. An impartial examination of the methods which employers have

¹ See Hanna's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 94, where a brief but vivid account is given of the social events of 1822-30 ; also Chalmers' *Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation*, vol. li. pp. 335-62.

adopted shows that adequate attention has not been paid to the legitimate interests of the workmen. Many employers gather in large profits which are not due exclusively to their own initiative, or to their capital in use, or to their personal service. They appropriate the surplus values; they are satisfied that they have discharged all their duties to their workmen and workwomen if the market price of labour be paid; all the rest they claim and keep as their own. Others enjoy monopolies which they have secured by underselling and crushing out competitors. They are, therefore, placed in positions of privilege; and it must be said that many of them have unhesitatingly used their position of privilege for personal ends alone.

Justice must, however, be done to employers as well as to workmen. It is, indeed, only the uninformed and the hasty who will venture to pronounce a judgment upon them. They have not been offered instruction either by economists, or moralists, or by the Church whose special business it is to teach the highest ethics; and in few instances have they reasoned out their principles of action. Distribution of profits has seldom been made by them in obedience to the claims of fair dealing and equity. In business, they argue, it is every man for himself. Masters are thus the creatures of circumstances as much as workmen. They do not see the far-reaching consequences of their conduct. Moral and economic considerations are not present to their minds. They can be therefore very exacting. There are, it is true, exceptions to the rule. There are some who have studied carefully the economic principles of trade in the

light of moral claims, and these act with conspicuous disinterestedness. Some adopt "profit-sharing." Others give their workpeople shares in their business. These things witness to the convictions which are entertained by a slowly-increasing number of masters that, gathering all profits to oneself cannot be justified in the court of conscience.

VI.

But within the last few years workmen have done much more than merely form Trades Unions. They have organised a powerful Labour Political Party. They have sent labour representatives to speak for them in Parliament. The false economics of the market-place and the sufferings of the poor have called the Labour Party into existence; and labour representation is the answer which workmen have returned to those who have gathered all gains to themselves under the protection of Parliamentary laws.

Self-defence and self-aid are no longer regarded by workmen as all that they should attempt. They claim the right to alter the economic conditions under which they work. They have, indeed, changed the centre of gravity of their claims from mere defensive or protective associations to Parliamentary demands as citizens; and these demands include Unemployment, Arbitration, and Minimum Wage Acts, adequate Old Age Pensions, and generally the right to effect through legislation what formerly was done by strikes and bargaining. Workmen have thus substituted a systematic policy for haphazard

means of self-defence. The Taff Vale decision, which threatened the reserve funds of Trades Unions, was the occasion, if not also the cause, of the passing of the Trades Disputes Act. A new situation has been created. An enormous change has been effected. The annual revenue of Trades Unions, which amounts to over £2,000,000, and their accumulated funds to about £5,000,000, will, it is anticipated, in future be employed, not in self-defence agencies, for these will be no longer required, but in positive productive Co-operative Schemes which will make for practical collectivism. The future of these new and powerful social factors can, however, as yet only be surmised.

If anything were required to prove the urgent necessity of giving to the social ideal due consideration, it is just the state of things thus briefly described. The claims of workmen and master which this state of things emphasises cannot be disregarded. They are urgent; they cannot brook delay. Attention must be given to them; and all who are sincerely anxious to play honourably and well their part in life will weigh these claims, and try to satisfy them

VII.

When, therefore, one surveys the wide field of social life with its countless activities, and also with its confusions and contradictions, it is at once seen that many eminent sociologists have given to society a careful and scientific treatment. They have made, and many are still

making, a praiseworthy endeavour to interpret social life in the light of all that mental science and anthropology, ethics and economics teach. They perceive more or less clearly the social ideal, and labour for its speedy realisation. But the best-informed among them recognise that the day is still far off when this ideal will be reached ; and that they must lay down their unfinished task in the hope that future generations will reap the benefit of their labours, and carry on their work to completion. All this is hopeful, and justifies one in saying that the data of social life are receiving a truly scientific treatment.

But, on the other hand, it must be recognised that many attempts have been made to improve the conditions of social life in the most haphazard manner. For this, as already shown, the ill-informed are not altogether to blame. Their situation and outlook are not entirely of their own creation. Where poverty pinches, schemes which promise relief will always be eagerly welcomed. Where self-interest and greed appeal, under economic conditions favourable to both, the temptation will always be strong to gather everything to oneself. These are facts and phenomena of which account must be taken.

But they also point a moral, and call attention to the weighty tasks which lie to the hands of all who are interested in social betterment. They accentuate in a special manner the claims of the social ideal for consideration. For, according as the goal of all social actions is clearly seen and kept steadily in view, the motives and aims will be supplied which give momentum and direction to social schemes and social work.

Many other arguments might be adduced to prove the urgent necessity of trying to form right conceptions of the *end* of social life. Some of these will be stated and enforced as we proceed; but perhaps already enough has been said by way of showing that the social ideal should receive the most careful attention, and that social evils will vanish and a fairer state of society be realised when the social ideal is persistently made the object of more and more intelligent social endeavours.

I shall try, in the next chapter, to supply evidence of the inspiration which comes to all social reformers whenever the social ideal is apprehended, and the conditions are seen under which it is pursued.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SOCIAL IDEAL : AN INSPIRATION TO SOCIAL SERVICE.

IF it be asked, Wherein lies the inspiration to social service? there is ample justification for saying that it lies in the service itself, and in the perception of the ideal towards the attainment of which service is directed. Here an appeal can be made to experience which shows that a far wider outlook, far greater satisfaction, and far more pleasure come from helping one's fellow-men than from the pursuit of personal gain. It is for ever true that one who loses his life in service finds a higher life; and this when clearly perceived carries with it a powerful inspiration to social service.

Look at the other side of the shield. The pursuit of personal gains entails the encountering of temptations which few can withstand. To seize, for instance, the opportunity of overreaching or taking advantage of one's neighbour is to most people an irresistible temptation. Many fall before it; and dishonesty and distrust follow, with the result that their lives become moral ruins. When advantage is taken of another's ignorance or want of alertness great material prosperity may be secured; but the act itself leaves disturbing memories behind it which can never be entirely forgotten. Besides, it cannot be insisted on too much that material possessions cannot satisfy the hunger of the human

spirit. There come to all men times when this hunger asserts itself. Man is made for, and finds his life in things higher than the material.

Work, therefore, prompted by greed of gain cannot bear comparison with work done for the good and well-being of others. The former is soul-contracting; the latter is full of inspiration. From every effort which is made to make the lives of one's neighbours better and brighter there comes an incentive to renew and enlarge one's efforts in the fields of social service.

If the wide province within which efforts are made to realise the ideal, and if the greatness of the task which those undertake who make these efforts be considered, the strength and volume of the inspiration which accompanies all actual social service will be still more apparent. It is a principle of human life that, given worthy aims and adequate motives for seeking their realisation, men, under the influence of the inspiration, which these aims and motives produce, strive with all their might, and cannot be satisfied until they have made a great effort to reach the goal in view.

If, then, the province of social life be accurately surveyed, and the evils which must be removed from that province be clearly seen, altogether worthy aims and powerful motives are at once supplied to those who give themselves to the betterment of social relationships and the attainment of the social ideal. The task is one of the greatest that can be undertaken; but the inspiration to the task is also the strongest and purest, since those who engage in it have the knowledge that they are relieving distress, lightening the loads of the over-

burdened, bringing hope and cheer to the dispirited, making justice and love regnant in social life, purifying the streams which run through the channels of society, and helping to establish a permanent social state and thus to make human life brighter, better, and happier. This is a sacred task ; it carries with it its own reward and seeks no other ; it is, indeed, a great inspiration to social service.

II.

But if one turns from this inspiring view to the present and actual state of society, one sees how the very desperation of this state also inspires with ever-increasing zeal those who labour for social betterment. What, then, are the graver elements in the social life of to-day ? In the cities and larger towns slum hovels where vice and misery go together ; sweating, which degrades employers and employees ; in cities and villages temptation to intemperance, which destroys tens of thousands of men and women ; reckless gambling ; the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, while the many are reduced to poverty and suffering ; excessive hours of toil ; lack of opportunity for mental and moral improvement ; monopolies of land, and place, and power. These are some of the graver elements in the social life of to-day.

All true men are profoundly dissatisfied with them, and declare that they should not be tolerated in an enlightened age and in a Christian land. This is, indeed, the judgment which is instinctively formed and expressed when the poverty, hardships, and sufferings of modern

social life are brought home to the healthy-minded, and when they realise something of what social evils mean. Such a judgment is not without its value and effect.

But much more is needed than this pronouncement. Those who thus conclude must enter the social arena, and do their utmost to remove the evils which are destroying the vitality of society. When they grapple with these evils they soon discover that they are engaged in moral as well as economic work of the greatest magnitude; and just because it is moral they also soon experience the enthusiasm and inspiration which come from all moral endeavours. Their task may be arduous, and even stupendous; but it is one of the compensating advantages of social work that it carries with it inspiration proportionate to the greatness of the task which is undertaken.

But even this is not all that is necessary; for, it is also essential that constant efforts be made to form ever clearer and clearer conceptions of the nature and enormity of the social evils that are to be eradicated; of the false economic principles which first tend to produce and next are used to defend many of them; and, above all, of the social ideal towards the attainment of which all social endeavours should be directed. Enthusiasm needs to be guided by knowledge; and the clearer one's conceptions of these things are the more effective will the inspiration be which comes from social service. But it will be found on investigation, that many of the evils of social life exist and are tolerated, because the great mass of the people, rich and poor, have not had, and at present do not have, any clear idea as to what

are the economic and moral causes of social evils, and as to what is the true goal of human life itself.

False conceptions of "success" explain the unworthy aims of even good men, who think more of their privileges than of their duties. Few of these have any idea of the goal of social life. They have not, perhaps, ever given it an hour's serious consideration ; and as they know nothing of its value, their actions are therefore misdirected. Were they clearly to see that the most sacred obligation rests upon them to care for the welfare, and to labour for the well-being of their neighbours, and that they dare not rest satisfied so long as there are tens of thousands of the poor ill-fed and ill-housed, and also without opportunities of mental and moral improvement, society would soon present a new aspect.

III.

But unfortunately many hesitate even to recommend these obvious duties. They say that all reforms must begin with the individual, and they pretend to be alarmed lest individual initiative should be destroyed, and *character* be subordinated to *condition*. These are old objections which have been often answered, but they persist and die hard. It is at once granted that *condition* alone, even if it should be absolutely perfect, is not and cannot be taken as a substitute for *character*. It is also admitted that many who are free from care as to what they shall eat and drink are anything, save ideal examples of right moral living. But do not their temptations really come from their superabundance? Is not also

their indifference to the claims of their fellows an explanation of their unsatisfying and unsatisfactory lives?

It is not, however, to be assumed that the rich are morally worse than their poorer neighbours, nor that they are incapable of heroic self-denying actions. But it is beyond all question that many of them waste their energies, and misuse their splendid opportunities chiefly because they have not a right conception of social obligations. An affluence of wealth does not guarantee noble living. Freedom from poverty, material comforts, and ample leisure may conduce to a higher life, but these things cannot ensure it. Experience shows only too often that they produce temptation which few are able successfully to resist. There is, then, little danger or risk of anyone who understands life and its obligations committing the mistake of saying that *condition* is everything.

But, while the possession of wealth and the power which it can command must be placed within definite limits, on the other hand, there is absolutely no justification for the contention, which some urge with great persistence, when they maintain that *condition* counts for little. These point to many very poor people who are living good lives, and with a note of triumph in their voice they cry, "Look at the poor; many of them live beautiful lives, even in the midst of evil surroundings"; and then they proceed to argue that environment does not hinder the development of character. Not indeed! Will anyone say that these same poor people would not lead still more beautiful lives if they were freed from vexing cares as to food and clothing? But, in reality,

there are few of the very poor who rise superior to their surroundings. The great majority, as anyone who visits the city slums may see, go down under the weight of the social evils by which they are assailed.

The morally healthiest are not found either among the idle rich, or in the slums, but among the fairly well-housed working classes. Riches and poverty carry with them temptation which few can withstand. There is, therefore, great and urgent need for Agur's prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." The accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few, and the dire poverty of the many, are indeed the gravest social dangers of the day. No thoughtful person can be indifferent to these dangers. They menace society, and call for a searching investigation into all the moral and economic factors which are now in operation, and which are leaving their deep impress upon social life.

The newly awakened consciousness of these dangers explains the wonderful social activity of the day. In presence of them men feel a powerful inspiration to social service. They say with emphasis that they must be swept away ; and, therefore, it happens that among the many efforts which are made to equalise the means of subsistence, some men look to Parliament and urge the adoption of drastic remedial measures ; others put their trust in voluntary combinations ; while of all who are alive to the problem presented, it may be said that they earnestly desire to see the painful and hurtful inequalities of great wealth and great poverty reduced to a minimum.

Whether, then, the position of the rich or that of the poor be taken into account, it is plain that at the present

time there is no more urgent duty lying to the hands of all who desire to see right social relationships established, and society itself strong and healthy, than that of trying to understand the actual state of social life, and of bringing those agencies to bear upon it which will effect permanent betterment.

IV.

This brief examination of the position of those who know nothing of poverty, and who hesitate to commend structural changes on the social fabric, lest individual initiative and the spirit of enterprise should be destroyed, and too much be made of *condition*, brings out in a negative way the value of the social ideal as an inspiring influence. For these have not given due attention to the *end* towards which all social efforts should be directed. They therefore deny themselves the benefits of the inspiration which comes from pursuing the social ideal; and it is, one must add, little wonder that they misread human life and its obligations. Satisfied with things as they are, they fail to do justice to their moral powers and social instincts. They never feel the heart-thrilling inspiration which accompanies all endeavours to relieve poverty and to elevate our common social life. Society and its claims do not appeal to them. They are all for the individual, and they therefore never have even a vision of those conditions of society in which their own lives can be truly and fully realised.

Nor have they any conceptions of the unity of human life. To make an attempt to interpret the life of the

individual, or that of society, without any regard to the Purpose which runs through and unifies them, is not only misleading, but it is also fatal to social betterment. Life, individual and social, has an aim and a goal. When this is forgotten or overlooked, agencies of social improvement are adopted in a haphazard manner, and inspiration is taken out of human life.

This emphasises the need for a clear conception of the social ideal, and shows that not otherwise than by pursuing this ideal can inspiration be enjoyed when the irksomeness and difficulties of social service are experienced. The luminous social ideal throws back its light upon the way which must be taken in order to reach it; and as that way is followed, the inspiration which comes from a vision of the ideal is enjoyed by all who walk in its light.

V.

Inspiration must, however, be guided by intelligence and tempered by foresight, otherwise it will run into mere sentiment. Search must, therefore, be made as to the origin of social evils. The nature and value of the work, which makes for improved social relationships, must also be examined. When these things are done thoroughly and with care, intelligence then directs the volume and energy of inspiration. Much time may be required in order to trace social evils to their real origin. The work, which makes for the social ideal, may be hard and discouraging. But by those who are engaged in either the one task or the other, the glow of en-

thusiasm is soon felt, for they know that they are trying to improve social relationships ; and when they recognise that they are not working blindly and without a definite object in view, but towards an ideal altogether worthy, they at the same time see clearly that intelligence is guiding the inspiration which impels and encourages them to social service.

These things are neither idle dreams, nor matters of mere abstract speculation. They are intensely real. They touch the individual, and they affect society. They, in a pre-eminent degree, contain inspiration to social service. The newly awakened interest in social subjects, the increasingly keen and sympathetic sense of social obligations, and the thousands of people who are willing and eager to render social service, witness to their reality. There is urgent need for this service, for society is burdened with evils. Men and women and helpless children suffer. Their sufferings cry for relief and an effective remedy. The present condition of things cannot last for ever ; and that they shall not is proven by the ever clearer and clearer vision which many have of the social ideal, and by the powerful inspiration to work for the good of all men which ever accompanies this vision.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOCIAL IDEAL : SOME IMPORTANT AIDS.

I.

IT has been shown that *condition*, which is largely a question of material things, must be rightly estimated. Neither too little nor too much stress should be laid upon it. There is another and an equally important consideration to which attention should be paid. I refer to the spiritual power which man may bring to social affairs. This is a very important *aid* to social betterment. The material and the spiritual bear directly upon the social, and that because man partakes of both. He is, on the one side of his nature, dependent upon the material. He has appetites and desires which only the material or physical can satisfy. He is thus bound to earth and earthly things. These hold a very large place in the thoughts of the great majority of mankind. It is, accordingly, an entirely false view to pretend not to care for what promises to minister to natural wants. These constantly assert themselves ; and, therefore, it is legitimately contended that one's surroundings, and the measure of command which one has over material possessions, must have a definite place assigned to them.

But man is also spirit, and is closely related to spiritual things. He has aspirations after what is morally highest,

and affinities with the most exalted spiritual beings. The human spirit can hold converse with the Divine. It is itself a creation of the Divine Spirit. It has, therefore, a sphere and influence distinctively its own.

These truths must be recognised in any adequate interpretation of the social ideal. For, far more important aid may be given to its attainment by the spiritual than is possible by the material. The one occupies a lower, the other a higher plane; and, manifestly, the higher renders the more effective service. These two factors should not, however, be placed in opposition, the one to the other. Both have their functions; and care should be taken rightly to relate them.

II.

For the same reason care must be taken to assign to the spiritual and the social their proper and respective places. Unfortunately some earnest but short-sighted people set these two factors in direct opposition. They are all for the spiritual, and without compunction they neglect the social. It is not uncharitable to say that in many instances this preference is deliberately made, and that an adequate excuse is thereby assumed to be offered for the neglect of social duties. Many, at least, who loudly proclaim their interest in the spiritual are altogether indifferent to the social. They do not perceive that the one is intimately related to the other, and that it is impossible to attain to what is spiritually the highest, if what is socially the best be neglected.

Now, as already stated, the spiritual is a powerful

aid to social betterment, and should be made to bear directly on the social. It is in the social sphere that great opportunities are given for the display and wholesome exercise of the spirit of religion. In that sphere the religious spirit can prove its worth. But if religious people refuse to enter into it, and if social duties be treated with neglect, a great injustice is done to their Faith, and incalculable loss is suffered.

But, after all, this is an old temptation which has often assailed, and only too successfully, many who have claimed to live the highest spiritual life. Monasticism is a witness to the persistence and strength of this temptation. Under the influence of mistaken conceptions of duty good men retired from the world, and imagined that the highest spiritual life was only possible in the cloister and the cell. But, on the one hand, they failed to perceive the true nature of evil, and, on the other, to apprehend clearly where the greatest services could be best rendered to their fellows, and where their own lives could be most fully realised.

The same temptation still persists, and though it is ever changing its forms, none the less powerfully does it assail many religious people. In modern times it assumes two unmistakable forms. In the one case, the finer the religious nature the more burdensome is the presence of the world felt, and the longing therefore to get rid of this burden becomes most intense. The instinct to renounce the world often means, in this instance, a desire and an effort to go far beyond not only the boisterous and loud-voiced claims of the world upon one's attention, but also even beyond the limits

of one's own personality. Satisfaction is sought not in the recluse's cell, but in the enjoyment of a limitless freedom, and in contact with the great spiritual forces of life, whose influence is at once elevating and heart-thrilling. The seers and prophets of to-day are the hermits of the Middle Ages transformed, and placed in a world where noise and turmoil are nowise lessened, but rather intensified by the very activities of modern life. These seers and prophets have often bright visions of the eternal verities ; but if one examines their impassioned utterances one finds that for the most part they are content if they succeed in giving to their visions befitting expression, either in the harmonious words of a Tennyson, or in the rugged phrases of a Carlyle. They seldom descend to the common affairs of life. They stand aloof, and their very aloofness prevents them from taking their legitimate share in efforts for the betterment of society.

In the other case a different spectacle is witnessed. Those whose religious nature is of a coarser fibre compliment themselves upon "the higher life" which they profess to live; and with remarkable self-complacence they refuse to engage in social work. They claim to live for what they call "higher things," and whatever, in their judgment, is less than these things has for them no attraction, save where their self-interests or personal gains are at stake ; and then they display an eager zeal which surpasses even the passionate ardour of the sheerest worldling.

How these traits of character exhibit themselves in such persons is one of those problems which is encountered in every village and city. This peculiar

type of character is indeed seen everywhere, and among all classes of society. Perhaps the only reasonable solution of their conduct is that they really do not understand the moral obligations of the Faith which they so loudly profess; but whether this be a satisfactory explanation or not, this type of religious life persists, and is far from being rare. Those who represent it will have nothing to do with schemes of social reform. They distrust the social reformer; they question his motives, while they pride themselves upon their indifference to all social work.

I should not like to misread the motives and actions of either the one class or the other. But their respective defects, which cannot be gainsaid, ought not to be overlooked when an effort is made to explain the possible aids to the attainment of the social ideal. Religious people, above all others, if they rightly understand the life and service to which they are called, are just those who should be able to make the most valuable contribution to social betterment.

Besides, the real culture of the spiritual life is carried on in the social sphere and in the discharge of social duties. There must, it is true, be times for quiet reflection on the highest of all things; but even when this is allowed, it still holds good that the inspiration which comes from such reflection must express itself, among other things, especially in social service. There it is tested and tried, and its value made apparent.

The spiritual, then, should be an important and effective aid to the social, which for the great majority

of men is all-significant, since they pass their lives in daily and hourly contact with social affairs. It would be well for society if those who are really gifted with a clear spiritual vision gave themselves to social service. The betterment of society should certainly be their special care; for it is through the improvement of social relationship, and the regnancy of moral law, that a fair and healthy state of society will be realised and the kingdom of God will come.

III.

But the Church, as an organisation, is charged with the duty of making social relationships harmonious. She can render invaluable *aid* to social betterment. She has a message for Society as well as for the individual. With the clearer and wider conceptions of duty which come from the teachings of the Holy Spirit through Christian experience many of the Church's members are now eager to render social service. They have gone beyond the stage where they need to be convinced as to the propriety of the Church undertaking social duties; and they now ask for practical social tasks which they may attempt to discharge.

The Church cannot enter into business, but she can give her members directions as to the spirit in which business should be conducted; and fortunately there are signs that the Church is attempting to give her members directions. She is inviting masters to consider what they owe to their workpeople; and she is also calling upon the working classes to regard all labour,

even the very humblest, as sacred, and to render faithful service to their employers.¹

If the social mission of the Church be recognised, both the highly endowed and the less gifted of her members should enter the social arena and render whatever aid lies within their power. They can give great assistance if they trace the principles which govern social life not only to their origin, but also in their operation. For it is only when this is done that they are able to make an intelligent survey of social phenomena, of the evils which affect society, and of the remedies which may be applied to them.

IV.

A thorough investigation of all that pertains to social life is most urgent, and is a further *aid*. Here, indeed, the social worker may take a lesson from the exponent of physical science. Within the field of physical research splendid achievements have been accomplished. These are largely due to the patient investigator, who has pondered long and earnestly over the operation of the laws of nature. James Watt, revolving in his mind the problem of the steam-engine as he took his evening walk in Glasgow Green, is a type of the patient investigator. Many other instances could be given of the debt which physical science owes to the thinker, who has often called to his service reflection, and not infrequently also imagination. He has made bold surmises,

¹ See the Pastoral Letter on Social Questions issued by the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland, 1909.

and by the aid of working hypotheses has discovered many of nature's secrets.

Within the social sphere the same patient investigation must be exercised. Those who desire to aid social endeavours must not rush hurriedly to their task. They must take time to think. They must try to see the end towards which they labour. Patient investigation and work are indeed as much needed in the social as in the material sphere. Hypotheses may sometimes be legitimate, and, indeed, highly useful. The path along which the best social service may be rendered is not always plain. Imagination may therefore play no insignificant part in social development. But, as a rule, social reformers see more or less clearly their goal. The difficulties which they encounter are chiefly those which arise whenever they proceed to inquire, what agencies may be best employed in order to reach the social ideal? And it is just respecting these agencies that great difference of opinion may obtain. It will be necessary to examine in detail the question which is thus raised, for it is one which all who aim at social betterment early encounter; and, I may add, that it is by far the most important question, which claims attention at the hands of all who are interested in the improvement of social life.

V.

I am, however, for the moment considering aids to the attainment of the social ideal; and, in addition to those already indicated, prominence must be given to

the assistance which Parliament and voluntary societies may render. It is a truism to say that society cannot any more than the individual be reformed by Acts of Parliament; but the Legislature can do much by way of simplifying the present complex conditions of social life. All aids, Parliamentary and others, justify themselves according as they make for the good of the individual and of society.

If the work which Parliament has already done be taken into account, it must be admitted that the Legislature has greatly aided social betterment. One does not require to examine too minutely the motives which have influenced legislators. Love of place and power may have sometimes governed their actions; but no impartial observer can fail to see that, while some have been influenced by unworthy motives, many have been inspired by the highest social ideals, and that Parliament has passed many laws which operate towards securing better social conditions. Its duty is to hold the balance evenly as between the interests of the individual and those of society. These interests are not necessarily antagonistic. Some ill-informed people place them in opposition, the one to the other: and forthwith they proceed to declare exclusively either for individualism or socialism. All their arguments and reasonings are coloured by their economic theory. They fail altogether to perceive that a broad survey of social life, and an analysis of its most distinctive factors, justify the conclusion that the interests of society and those of the individual are capable of reconciliation.

Now, it is the special business of Parliament to weigh

these respective interests, and the claims which grow out of them. Acts of Parliament are good according as they tend to lessen social antagonisms, and make for common well-being. It is largely the fault of voters if men are returned to Parliament who seek only personal ends, and not the welfare of the people; for, after all, Parliament is largely an expression of the aspirations of those who cast their votes in the ballot-box.

At the present time Parliament itself is being slowly changed. Men are returned to it whose aim is to make Parliament a more and more efficient agent of social improvement. These may for a time fail. Acts which secure social betterment may be passed all too slowly. Vested interests and long-enjoyed privileges may offer a stout resistance to much-needed reforms. But even when all these things are taken into account, it still holds good that Parliament is a powerful *aid* to social improvement. The more efficient it becomes as a legislative institution the more it will simplify the present complex conditions of social life. It cannot do everything. It has its limits; but within these much can be done for the well-being of society.

The truism, that Parliament cannot do everything, shows that there is ample room for voluntary societies. These can supplement the efforts which the Legislature makes towards the improvement of social relationships. They also allow free scope for initiative, while the benefits which their members reap act as an incentive to greater and more self-denying endeavours. No one who is acquainted with the good work which voluntary societies—commercial, beneficiary, and purely defensive

—have done will lightly estimate the aid which they can give to social betterment. That there are many defects in organisation and in the methods adopted within these societies is frankly admitted; but if anyone claims the right to sit in judgment upon them, he should remember that inexperience always carries with it defects and failings. Besides, he should also recollect that these societies have been of comparatively recent growth. It is only within recent years that restrictions, imposed by Parliament, have been taken off, and that their members have enjoyed freedom to develop their institutions. In many countries they are still prohibited, or are hedged about with such restrictions as make healthy development almost impossible.

A great future lies before voluntary societies. They are likely to play a very important part in social development. They are educational agencies. The members who compose them are obliged to think out the meaning and solution of the economic questions which are constantly presenting themselves. The members are also taught self-reliance and self-respect.

These are great benefits, and social life soon experiences the wholesome influence which they carry with them. But commercial combinations are exposed to strong temptations. Their members must, therefore, be on their guard lest they make the obtaining of dividends their chief aim. Of this danger they are constantly being reminded by those who see no benefits in voluntary combinations. There are many evidences that the more enlightened members see this danger, and are taking all means within their power to avoid the temptation which constantly assails them.

Voluntary societies may accomplish two great objects, and thereby give powerful assistance to the betterment of social life. They may displace the hated and hateful Trusts, which have openly used political power to enable them to grasp monopolies. The consolidation of the vast industries of America into a few Trusts is a menace to the social life of that great country, and also a warning to all other countries. The Trusts contemplate the enrichment of the few, voluntary societies that of the many. The individual trader cannot successfully fight these Trusts, but co-operative societies can. If those States which have permitted the Trusts to seize political power and monopolies deprive them of the privileges which they have too long enjoyed and greatly misused, voluntary societies, composed of great numbers of the people, will speedily take the place of the Trusts, and find economic methods of production and distribution which will confer benefits upon all classes.

But voluntary societies may also show what their members can accomplish, and thus get rid of the notion that Parliament should do everything that is required for the development of social life. The Legislature can, and, indeed, must do as much as possible; but there are duties which must be discharged in the interests of social betterment which it cannot undertake. Nor can the individual, isolated from his neighbours, and standing alone, perform these duties. Combination is essential. Voluntary societies alone supply the conditions which make the right discharge of these duties possible.

Take, for instance, the question of unemployment or of adequate old-age pensions. Parliament may do much

towards providing work for the unemployed by undertaking public improvements, and it may also make large contributions towards providing an adequate pension fund. But works of public improvement have their limits, and economic laws forbid their arbitrary extension. Defiance of these laws spells loss of public credit, and *that* again entails loss of remunerative work of any kind.

It should never be overlooked, though politicians in making promises often forget, that only employment which makes for sustenance is profitable. Dr Chalmers pointed this out with great plainness. He was, indeed, one of the first to offer an intelligent criticism of State employment. There are those who think that the Government can command employment. They contend that if it has a great reserve of funds it may spend money in employing labour ; but unless the labour be remunerative, that is, unless it directly or indirectly ministers to the production of sustenance, money so spent is really a dole of misguided charity.

And, as to old-age pensions, most people admit that the provision made by Parliament is all too inadequate, and should be increased. In thousands of cases the individual worker cannot afford a direct contribution. What, however, he as an individual worker cannot accomplish may be easily done by a voluntary society of which he is a member. Without serious injury to anyone a certain amount of the profits earned could be ear-marked for this purpose. I am aware that there are many working people outside these societies ; but, I am only dealing here with the benefits which voluntary combinations secure and confer. I

am only attempting to show what they may accomplish, and, therefore, what aid they can render towards social improvement. They are one of many agencies that must be used.

The Legislature and voluntary societies, then, may modify the complex conditions of social life. The present conditions cannot be allowed to continue. If left untouched by the Legislature and voluntary combinations they will become more complex and more baffling.

VI.

Attention must also be directed to the *aid* which is rendered towards social improvement by those whose lives are largely spent in expounding the principles of social life. The student of philosophy may lend a definite assistance to social betterment. For a long time it was the great reproach, and indeed the blemish of philosophic research, that it was carried on without regard to man's common wants. Within recent years, however, a remarkable change has taken place ; for now there are few philosophic writers who can rest satisfied unless they, at least, attempt to relate their search after knowledge to some practical ends. It is accordingly at the present time quite a distinctive note of philosophic investigation that scarcely a volume is issued from the press without some chapters devoted to practical questions. Hence the rise of Social Philosophy.

Philosophy is not fully described when it is spoken of as a search after knowledge. It must also make an

attempt to explain human life. The search after knowledge is indeed made for this end, and therefore necessitates endeavours towards social improvement. This is a great gain; for it is a powerful aid and inspiration to the social worker if he knows that, while he labours often under disheartening circumstances, he has, as a co-worker, the philosophic student, and that together they are not only attempting, but also accomplishing, something which makes for the attainment of the social ideal.

The assistance which the thinker may give to the worker is so important that I propose to examine in detail,¹ and in the light of history, what the thinker has accomplished. But here it may be said that the contribution which philosophy renders to the social reformer is invaluable, and that nothing save good ensues when its conclusions are taken as guides in all endeavours to improve social life.

I have reviewed at some length the "aids" of the social ideal. I shall attempt in the next chapter a statement of some conclusions, drawn from a reading of history and a study of philosophy, respecting the conditions under which social progress may be made. It is scarcely necessary to say that the most careful attention must be given to the facts of social life in order to ascertain what are the conditions of social betterment; and that these conditions must be constantly kept in view by all who aim at accomplishing good and enduring work.

¹ See chapter xxi.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL PROGRESS.

I.

FROM what has been already stated it is now manifest that it is pre-eminently the duty of all who aim at social betterment to inform themselves as to the facts and phenomena of social life. The present conditions especially under which work is done, and men and women pass their lives, must be understood as accurately as possible. Optimists must take account of things as they are, lest they should be discouraged when unexpected difficulties are encountered. Pessimists must also apply themselves to the same task, lest they in turn should conclude that the world is hopelessly bad, and that no real improvements can be effected.

Those who hold that everything in the world is ordered for the best must not forget that there are grave social evils to be eradicated, and that in trying to root out these evils special care must be taken to understand the present and actual state of social life. History often repeats the painful story of the light-hearted manner in which optimists have entered upon the most stupendous social enterprises. It tells of many who, under-estimating the difficulties which must be surmounted, have soon become despondent in view of the

obstacles which oppose them. It records their failures, and, at the same time, writes out in capital letters warnings to which the thoughtful cannot be indifferent.

History also relates a similar story of the failure of pessimists ; but in their case failure has been chiefly due to lack of historic vision. They have not observed the vast strides which society has taken towards a better state ; and as their attitude in relation to social betterment is defended by a number of negations, it is not surprising that they should have misread the past, and that they misunderstand the present conditions of social life.

The lesson here is obvious. For, all who aim at social betterment must be on their guard against the two extremes to which human nature is ever tempted to run. A well-balanced mind and patience are needed. Accurate information of the economic and moral factors now in operation is also required.

Those whose vision is clearest can, however, see only a small part of the social movements of the day. It will, therefore, be readily conceded that, while the widest possible survey of the present condition of things is urgently required, the task of making such a survey is far from being simple or easy. But though beset with difficulties it must, in the interests of social life, be attempted ; for, if left undone, all labour towards social betterment will be conducted under conditions not unlike those which obtain when agriculturalists carry on husbandry operations, or engineers attempt mechanical work without taking into their service all that modern science places at their disposal.

II.

The present conditions of social life are marked by extreme complexity. They need to be closely studied and, if possible, to be explained. But an adequate explanation necessitates, among other things, the raising of such questions as, What economic principles do our law-makers adopt in dealing with the problems of social life? Have they deliberately chosen any? Or, do they frame laws in a haphazard manner, and only in obedience to loud, popular clamour? What, again, are the industrial questions of the day? and how do they arise? It is beyond all dispute that the present state of society faithfully reflects the economic principles which political art translates into laws, and business men reduce to commercial transactions.

To know the times, and the spirit and drift of social life, the observer of social facts must look beneath appearances; otherwise an interpretation is impossible. But if he tries, in his survey, to understand things as they are, he sees clearly that Acts of Parliament passed in the interests of one class alone, be it the rich or the poor, work out definite social complications, hardships, and evils. On the other hand, the observer also sees that enlightened legislation ameliorates the conditions of social life; for, if the political fountain be pure, the streams which flow through the channels of society will be fresh and cleansing. Political art has a great function to discharge in the interests of social well-being. It is true that, as we have already seen, Acts of Parliament alone cannot reform society. They can, however,

make a useful contribution ; and doles of charity cannot take their place.

In the measure in which statesmen are instructed economists, in the same measure will they be good legislators. They must make their choice as between competing economic principles. They must also give prominence to the moral factor in social life. Haphazard legislation is of all things the most fruitful of social evils. Legislation has hitherto been of the severest individualistic type ; but collectivism has recently been urging its claims. It is manifestly the duty of the intelligent legislators to weigh these claims, and, in so far as they are valid, to allow them to exercise their due weight when legislative measures are under consideration.

III.

But, an adequate survey of social life necessitates also a careful study of the industrial problems of the day ; and here, in order to understand what economic and moral laws receive obedience, such questions must be raised as, What are the duties of masters towards workmen ? Have they any beyond that of paying them the market price of labour ? And, are there any hopes for a thorough improvement of social relationships if that standard of remuneration be the only one adopted ? Many are profoundly dissatisfied with this standard. It does not attempt to estimate the value of the work which is done. It takes no account of workmen otherwise than as "hands." It excludes all moral obligations on the

part of masters as to how their workpeople are housed and fed.

This dissatisfaction expresses itself in many directions. It explains to a great extent the origin of Trades Unions, which at their inception were, as we have seen, largely defensive associations. It also accounts for many socialistic schemes which are formulated and urged at the present time. But it has likewise obliged economists to examine carefully the question of the surplus value of labour; and many, even of the more conservative of them, now hold that, after a master has remunerated himself first for his personal service, next for the use of his capital, thirdly for the risks which he incurs, he is bound to consider the claims of his workpeople and what is due to them.

The welfare of society and the well-being of the great masses who compose it alike demand that something higher and better than the market price of labour should be adopted as the standard of remunerating services rendered. It is a long time since Dr Chalmers contended that there is a far closer relation between morality and a high rate of wages than most people imagine.¹ The unequal distribution of wealth, largely due to some being over-remunerated and others being underpaid, is one of the gravest social questions of the day. It is, too, a question which cannot brook delay of settlement. Some remedy must be found for the inequality, otherwise dissatisfaction and unrest will grow deeper and deeper.

Accordingly there are many who support, and even

¹ *Vide* p. 5.

urge, remedies more or less drastic. An industrial system, it is contended, must be adopted under which the value of the service which is rendered will be adequately remunerated. Some look forward to the time when industries shall be socialised. Others, in whose social programme industrial changes hold a prominent place, argue that the unequal distribution of wealth will only be rectified when the maximum of taxation is imposed on land, and when all businesses and professions, which are protected by legal privileges and combinations, are adequately taxed. All that is "unearned," whether in land, or business, or the professions, belongs, others contend, to the State, and should be used as a common fund to equalise the distribution of wealth.

If one tries to make a surmise as to the method or agency by means of which wealth will be most easily distributed, there are good reasons for holding that taxation will accomplish much towards this end. Other agencies must also be employed; but taxation of large incomes will, in the opinion of many enlightened reformers, cause least disturbance, and at the same time it will relieve the over-rich of obligations which, as we have already seen, they cannot discharge, while it will give to many an opportunity of rendering services which are at present beyond their power. These fiscal reforms may, indeed, appear to many as carrying with them very drastic and altogether unwarranted changes on the industrial and land system. It is unwise to neglect to take note of them. They are advocated with great persistence; and anyone who endeavours to under-

stand the social movements of the day must give them attention.

But there is another side to the industrial problem of the day. What of the workmen? They have also their duties; and how do they discharge them? Remissness on their part is quickly punished; but service rendered through fear of punishment cannot be the highest or best. This motive, however, obtains on a large scale. The working men are not perhaps to blame. They are often driven too hard; and it is seldom pointed out to them that good workmanship is a sacred duty, and that its reflex influence makes for moral development. Workmen take their part in the great industrial conflicts of the day; and as they seldom see anything but economic procedure governed by self-interest, they only too faithfully copy the example which is set before them. These are common features of the industrial problem, and come within the survey of social life.

IV.

But they raise other questions, such as, What, under present conditions, are the actual pursuits and ideals of working men? Have they time and inclination for intellectual and moral improvement? Do they seek anything beyond *bread* and the roughest kinds of amusements? An answer should be given to these questions.

If a thorough investigation were made it would show

that, while vast multitudes of working men are blindly struggling with economic forces which they little understand, and never rise either in thought or feeling much beyond what the eye sees and the hand handles, there is a very large and an ever-increasing number who take an intelligent interest in economic and political questions. They themselves feel keenly the pressure of the social evils of the day. They also see that men of all ranks and classes have become conscious of these evils. The very magnitude of the social problem has touched their susceptibilities. They have, perhaps, begun with questions of *bread*, but they have gone on to the consideration of economic, political, and moral issues. Their feelings of indignation have been evoked in presence of the sufferings of hundreds of thousands of helpless and miserable poor people; but they have been taught by a hard experience that something more than indignation is needed. At the present time, therefore, those who have been thus awakened to a sense of their duties and privileges give themselves to the study of the economic laws which lie beneath the surface of society and impart to it the features which at present characterise it. And it should be added, that many among the working classes are gradually obtaining a clearer perspective of life.

All these things are *notes* of our common social life. They come within a proper survey of it. The most careful observation of them should be made, lest hasty inferences should be drawn from social data, and arguments be used which cannot stand the test of investigation. Emphasis is rightly laid upon the necessity of thus accurately knowing the present conditions of social life.

For a beginning must be made with the *actual* if the *ideal* is to be pursued and ultimately attained.

V.

But whoever attempts this necessary task soon perceives that the present condition of things can only be fully and rightly understood when all social movements are examined in the light of the past. The history of social endeavours teaches this plainly. History itself sets up many beacons. It also writes out in large letters its own teachings. To misread the past is to misinterpret the present. The present, indeed, can only be understood in the light of the past. It is only thus that what now exists is rightly and clearly seen; it is only thus, too, that an explanation can be offered, *why* things have assumed the form by which they are now distinguished.

The effects of far-distant events, which now lie in the bosom of the past, are constantly making themselves felt. Nothing, indeed, escapes the influence of the past. The philosopher in the quiet of his study pondering over the system of truth which sages have formulated; the man of business pursuing with intense eagerness his daily duties; and the reformer watching the great social movements which arrest his attention, are all powerfully influenced by what has been thought and done in past ages.

The necessity of reading the present in the light of the past becomes therefore obvious. All efforts which are directed towards the future, and especially towards

the social ideal, must be carefully scrutinised and be corrected by way of modification or enlargement in the light of the teachings of history.

VI.

A correct reading of history and of present social movement shows that the stage, in the evolution of society towards an ideal state, has been reached where reflection upon the moral, economic, and political factors in operation is possible and is eminently needful. Reflection almost invariably issues in a vision of things in their true relation, the one to the other. This, when attained, is a great gain; for nothing else guarantees social progress with more certainty than an accurate perspective. The evils, which all lament, are then seen, and the necessity of making attempts towards their removal also becomes urgent. These attempts may be only tentative; but whatever is good and useful in them is likely to be retained. Reflection, indeed, makes a valuable contribution towards social betterment, since it leads not only to a view of the social ideal, but also to a sifting of the agencies by means of which it may be reached. It comes likewise to one's aid and reveals the *inwardness* of the social changes which are now taking place. It enables one, in addition, to see whither social movements tend.

But reflection carries with it a further reward, for it suggests that the present conditions of social life are not final. Greater progress than anything yet attained is possible. The goal is not yet reached; and there-

fore earnest endeavours are necessary on the part of all members of society.

Were these intimations and suggestions which come from reflection heeded, much would indeed be gained. On the one side, critics of the arm-chair would employ fewer objectionable epithets when attempting to describe social programmes and efforts ; and on the other side, the number of those who strenuously labour for the realisation of an all-satisfying social life would be greatly increased. For, if society is not all that it may become, earnest-minded people must experience considerable difficulty in trying to justify themselves when they refuse to join the vast company of disinterested social workers who are doing their best to improve society.

It is scarcely necessary to adduce evidence in support of the statement that the present conditions of society are not final. History shows that society is ever moving towards something higher and better than anything yet realised. Social instincts confirm the testimony of history ; while all the efforts that are made to improve the social conditions under which people now live, assume that improvements can be, and ought to be, effected.

I repeat, therefore, what has just been said ; for it cannot be too much or too often dinned into the ears of some good people that they have specific and definite duties in relation to the social life of the community in which they live ; and that the recognition of the privileges which society confers upon them should also be accompanied with the acknowledgment of the weighty obligations which they have to discharge. The duty is,

indeed, laid upon all to labour for the betterment of society according to their endowments, mental and moral; and also according to their opportunities, be they great or small.

VII.

Those who have observed the trend of philosophic thought within the last few years are aware that a view of society has been advocated which, if it were seriously accepted, would impose upon all its members obligations of which they could not divest themselves without doing injustice to their own nature. This view is largely *that* of the exponents of idealism. It is not really a new view. Plato, within certain limits, saw it. The Stoics emphasised it. St Paul enforced it on a higher plane than Plato, and by the consideration of motives of which the Stoics give no hint. He singled out *love* as the strongest impelling power to disinterested actions. "None of us," he says, "liveth to himself." Whether these words be taken as referring to the duty of Christians to Christians, or as the expression of a universal truth, they show that man needs his fellow-men for the development of his life.

The conception is therefore only new in this sense, that philosophers, now obliged to test their theories by the concrete needs of thousands of suffering people, and dissatisfied with all that individualism promises, have recently insisted upon man's need for social fellowship. Duties are now, therefore, considered in relation to society. Man needs social conditions of the most perfect

kind in order to realise his own life ; and his life will be strong and healthy, or the reverse, according as these conditions are provided for or denied to him.

“ Mutual aid ” is thus a demand of human nature, and social service thus rests upon a strong foundation. Much has been recently written upon this inspiring conception of society, and upon the duties which man owes to his fellows. It is enough, for the moment, to say that each generation has its own social duties which must be discharged, and that each hands on to its successor, not identical, but similar obligations. The transmission of unfinished tasks shall continue from age to age until the social ideal be reached.

But meanwhile guidance and direction respecting social obligations are necessary. These, if they are to be of any practical value, must be based on inductions made from a careful observation of the operations of social movements, past and present. It is idle to attempt to evolve from one's own inner consciousness counsels of perfection. This task, fortunately, is not necessary. For a rich heritage of thought and experience belongs to the present generation. The heritage lies to the hands of all, and it is the duty of all to make a right use of it.

This heritage is the gift of the world's great thinkers and workers. Seers and sages have spoken much about the origin, growth, and development of society. Historians have recorded the great social changes, due to the labours of enthusiastic reformers, which have made for progress. Philosophers have often paused, in their search after knowledge, to point out the principles and truths which guarantee wholesome improvements. Many

of them, from Plato to the latest exponents of mental science, have also outlined ideals ; and not a little of the progress that has been accomplished can be traced to the impulse and direction which have been imparted to those who have listened to their impassioned utterances.

The better, therefore, that the attempts which have been made to improve society are known, the more accurately will sound inductions be drawn. In any case, whoever undertakes the task of venturing either to offer reflections upon the development of society, or to make suggestions respecting social betterment, must also take pains to know the heritage of thought and experience which belongs to the social reformer. He must likewise make it his special business to interpret the social movements of the day, and to anticipate the realisation of the social ideal, in full view of all that this heritage contains. Guidance and direction must be based on broad generalisations, otherwise they are sure to prove useless, if not also misleading.

CHAPTER X.

PHASES OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

I.

ONE of the most notable phases of healthy social development is the comparatively slow rate at which progress is made. It needs, indeed, to be remembered that progress towards the social ideal is necessarily slow.

To this phase attention is first directed. Large masses of the people cannot be moved rapidly, and at the same time safely. Impatience is out of place on the part of the social reformer. He must learn to wait. If the steps taken are not to be retraced, each advance must be made with caution, and after due consideration.

Sometimes the rate of progress is greater than on other occasions. History, indeed, proves that when great political and industrial changes have taken place progress is often most marked ; but it also writes out a warning which only the thoughtless or impatient will disregard, for it supplies abundant proof that the social cataclysm is seldom an effective instrument of progress. The existence of great social evils may demand strong and drastic measures, but these are not always really remedial. Excess in one direction is apt to lead to excess in another.

The rebound from one extreme to its opposite is not unknown even in efforts which aim at social betterment. These are truisms to the student of history, but they should not on that account be forgotten or overlooked.

The social structure must be built slowly, and with prepared material. The stones of the social fabric must, indeed, be prepared with care, and laid in their own place with deliberation. Social jerry-building has no stability. The hastily-formed social scheme, and the flimsy agency employed to give it effect, are often nothing other than means of personal gain to their promoters, and have seldom, if ever, the interests of the people in view.

It is not thus that progress is made. On the contrary, the world's great benefactors have always been disinterested and unselfish. The hope of promoting the good of their fellows has been their inspiring motive, and anything less than such a motive is insufficient adequately to sustain those who attempt to effect permanent improvements on the social structure.

But even when reformers are fired with enthusiasm, and are most unselfishly devoted to their tasks, they must remember the ancient counsel *festina lente*, and be cautious when they are tempted to act hurriedly. The conservative element in human nature must be taken into account. It may be misused, and become a hindrance to progress, but it may also serve a good end. Its true function is to insist upon the testing of all schemes and agencies. To this no one can object, and certainly not the instructed reformer; for, taught by history, and having before him the sum of the labours of the world's great

thinkers, and of the experience of those who have thrown themselves with fervour into great national movements, he knows that if progress is to be real, lasting, and valuable, it must also be slow.

Some may complain that social progress is proceeding at too slow a rate. The grave social evils, they may argue, call for speedy and effective remedies. The person who knows the teachings of history will not, however, be misled by such a contention; for he has before his mind's eye the painful and disappointing results of those hastily constructed panaceas, which have done more perhaps than anything else to obstruct real progress.

On the other hand, some may maintain that there is really no such thing as social progress. Apparent reforms and advances, they may contend, are always followed by lapses and retrogressions. But the man who is well-informed knows that he has the testimony of history to support him when he replies to such pessimistic reasoning by saying that, if sufficiently long periods of time be surveyed, the slow and steady development of society, from a less to a more perfect state, becomes at once manifest.

The slow rate of progress, it may be pointed out, is natural, and is one of the strongest safeguards against violent revolutions. It allows the people to be prepared before attempts are made to carry out great and far-reaching changes in the constitution of the country. If due care be taken to grant such reforms as the people are able to use and appreciate, violent revolutions become almost impossible. They are, then, undesirable, and,

except in very exceptional circumstances, they are inexcusable. Both history and reflections upon its teachings confirm these conclusions.

II.

Every advance which society makes is the resultant of new ideas being instilled into the minds of great masses of the people. The classical illustration of this truth is *The Renaissance*. In one aspect the *New Birth* was intellectual. To this aspect, perhaps, most attention has been directed; but it was much more than a mere movement of intellect. It was moral and economic, and it resulted in the entire transformation of mediæval society. Feudalism, which was essentially an economic institution, received its death-blow. Men awoke to a sense of their rights, and gradually to a realisation of their responsibilities. Their outlook was entirely changed; it was larger and clearer, with the result that the possibilities of life became more apparent to them.

The value of the teachings of *The Renaissance* for the reformer lies pre-eminently in this, that it accentuated the need for education. By education is meant not merely a training which fits a pupil to answer the stereotyped questions of examiners, but the acquisition of knowledge and the mind trained to read economic and political history. Nothing else is more urgently required at the present time.

Within recent years a loud demand has been made for a thorough training in commercial subjects. That demand is legitimate; but a nation's greatness is some-

thing more and higher than a highly developed commerce, or than merely being able to accumulate material wealth ; and, therefore, if society is to take a new form, and is also to provide better conditions of life, it is all-important, as already pointed out,¹ that at an early stage in a pupil's career instruction should be given in economic and political history. The instruction given at the hustings is all too inadequate to enable the electors to cast their votes intelligently. Besides, the voters, on whose action the welfare of the State largely depends, have for the most part reached a stage in life when new ideas are assimilated with difficulty.

This is a large subject, and one also that deserves special treatment. But here it may be sufficient to say that educational agencies should be chiefly directed towards fitting scholars to discharge their duties as citizens and members of the State. Education must, indeed, have regard to social obligations, and fitness, on the part of scholars, to render social service. Gradually educationists are perceiving the urgency of this great need of our times. The best teachers are not satisfied with merely supplying pupils with information. They aim at training their minds. They apply themselves to this task in order that scholars may be prepared to undertake life's duties, and be well-equipped for the discharge of them.

If political votes are to be cast intelligently, this task must be prosecuted more and more persistently. Trained thinking must precede action. Only thus will new ideas of social improvement come to birth ; and new ideas of

¹ See pp. 67-8.

the possibilities of such improvement, of civic obligations, and of the duties which man owes to man in all relations of life, become actual factors in the development of social life. Society, as history shows, responds to the influence which new ideas create or evoke. It takes its colour and form from whatever engages the attention and holds the minds of the great masses of the people.

Reforms are, indeed, largely the expression of new ideas. Old and effete institutions have not given place to new and efficient organisations by mere accident. The need for the passing away of the old, and the adoption of the new, must be first apprehended by those who reflect upon what society is, and what it may become. Next, these may venture to make their suggestions respecting improvements. Some may insist upon the urgent need for a new development. In course of time new ideas permeate the minds of the people of a community, and then the changes are easily effected. This is, in broad outline, the history of social progress.

It is true that, in one sense, most reforms spring from the poor. Their sufferings, and the concrete illustrations which these give of the wretched conditions under which they live, call loudly for help. But history witnesses to the fact that the poor have, until within recent years, been unable to effect reforms, and that the men who have responded to their appeals and have given them the greatest aid have generally been those of the middle class in society.

With rare exceptions, the higher classes have been indifferent to the wrongs and sufferings which injustice inflicts. In the past the great commoners have been

the great reformers. Sufficiently in touch with those above and with those below them in the social scale, they have been able to grasp the situation, and to carry out reforms. The records of Parliament illustrate and confirm what has just been said, for they give ample evidence of the readiness with which the great commoners have seized and expressed the new ideas of their day, and also of the strenuous and disinterested service which they have rendered to the State.

But society is passing into a new phase. The working classes are realising their responsibilities, and from among them there are rising many capable men of marked public spirit, who are displaying remarkable administrative power. They are, with great devotion and ability, organising the working classes. They are also giving expression to their political and social aspirations. The working classes, in turn, are looking to these men from their own ranks for guidance. They are not now, as in the past, altogether dependent upon the great commoners. They have their own representatives in Parliament, and they trust them.

III.

The working classes being now armed with political power, it is not likely either that they will look unmoved at the ill-favoured conditions under which so many of their fellows are placed, or that they will hesitate to use the power with which they are invested. It is a deeply rooted tendency of human nature to employ political power for personal ends. Men have

done this too often. In the old days when kings were supreme they exercised their powers to please themselves, and to gratify their own desires, which were frequently anything but pure. When political power passed into the hands of a strictly limited electorate the same story was repeated. The laws which were passed were often openly and frankly in the interests of the few. Political education has made some changes for the better ; for there are to-day few politicians who will now avow that they use political power for anything save the public good.

It is certain that the temptation to which the working classes are exposed by the enormous political power which is now placed in their hands will prove too strong for them, unless purer motives and higher aims than those of self-gratification urge them to the disinterested use of their power. The working classes are marvellously kind, the one to the other. They also readily respond to any instruction which seems to carry reason with it. Some people may complain that they are ungrateful, and that they are easily misled by agitators ; but those who have left them without guidance, and have allowed the earnest but ill-informed agitator to mislead the working classes, can scarcely complain. The fault is largely theirs ; and if they indulge in loud lamentation, *that* is just what people invariably do when they reap the consequences of their own neglect of manifest duties.

Until within recent years class legislation was largely confined to the rich and powerful. They chiefly received the benefits which came directly and indirectly from it,

but that was because they alone held the reins of political power in their own hands, and were not slow to seize the opportunities which it offered to them.

Given different conditions under which the working classes exercise political power, and, as just stated, they will certainly employ it in their own interests unless larger views of civic and national duties be entertained.

IV.

What drastic changes may take place in the political world within a few years no one at present can forecast. There are many keen observers of social phenomena who hold that we are on the eve of great changes. Some hail them with gladness; others fear them, and are profoundly alarmed. The very uncertainty which obtains should, therefore, act as an impetus to acquiring accurate information, and to a careful searching of the principles on which society rests. The intimation of coming changes, which many profess to hear, should make one ask, "Whither are all social movements and aspirations tending?" Some conception of the social ideal thus becomes an absolute necessity. One cannot blindly, and at the same time also profitably take a part in the efforts which are made towards bettering the conditions of life and towards reaching the Ideal.

There is at the present time at least one hopeful sign. The present age is one in which live many acute thinkers and earnest-minded men. These have turned their attention to the problems which social life presents. They have made them a subject of thoughtful study.

Many of them are very willing, and indeed eager, to render social service. They are anxious to take their part as social workers in Parliament or in municipal institutions, and to do whatever lies within their power towards social betterment.

The ethical and economic influences in operation which, in a large degree, account for this eagerness to serve on the part of many, may not be easily traced; but the intense desire exists, and is one of the favourable signs of the times. In this newly-created eagerness there lies a prophecy of better days for all classes, while at the same time it gives colour and volume to the hope that the warnings of economic and political history will not be disregarded; that the reflections which the study of philosophy calls forth will not be forgotten; and that, as the result of giving due attention to all that history, experience, and observation teach, ever increasingly earnest endeavours will be made to reach the social ideal.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SOCIAL IDEAL : ATTITUDES TOWARD IT.

I.

HAVING examined some of the *conditions* and *phases* of social development, it is now necessary to attempt, not a definition, but a description of the social ideal, and to point out the more prominent attitudes which are adopted towards this ideal.

"The social ideal" is a term which is used to indicate a certain state of society. In attempting to describe this state the utmost care is necessary. A clear conception of it is invaluable. Now, it has already been seen that the agencies by means of which the social ideal may be reached must not be made one and the same with the ideal itself, and yet the realisation of the ideal is almost entirely dependent upon its agencies; for the ideal will be attained when all these agencies work harmoniously towards a common object. The social ideal is thus not agencies taken separately or even together, but the issue of their harmonious operations.

When, again, reference is made to "the social ideal," it must not be made identical with intellectual or moral ideals, though these tell directly upon the social, and are powerful factors in its realisation. Social conditions may be perfect. There will, however, still lie before the

individual and society illimitable regions of knowledge to explore, infinitely high moral ideals after which to strive, and the most extensive fields within which ever better and better service may be rendered.

The social ideal is, therefore, a state of society where its agencies—liberty, equality, and brotherhood—harmoniously co-operate towards a common *end*. It implies the enactment of just laws, and their impartial administration. The fear of “being thrust back by the efforts of others to thrust themselves forward” will be unknown in such a state of society. Within it a superabundance of wealth in the hands of a few will be neither possible nor desirable; but the maximum of opportunity for doing good will be given to all its members, while the inducement to each to seek his neighbour’s well-being, and thereby find his own, will be positive and strong.

This is the social ideal. Its realisation will entail arduous and sustained endeavours. But this is a definite object after which to strive; and it may be said that all social organisations, consciously or sub-consciously, have this definite goal in view; for if perfect conditions of social life be not both conceivable and attainable, there would be an end at once to all endeavours towards social betterment.

But while the social must not be made identical with the moral ideal, the great moral terms which are employed to express moral attainments must be applicable to society. It is true that the content of moral terms has been often discussed and will continue to be canvassed; but, apart from the weary discussion of the

schools, there is an almost universal consensus of opinion as to *what* is morally excellent. To society, because it is composed of human agents, moral terms can be applied. This is a silent but unmistakable prophecy that society can gradually approximate to an ideal state.

It may be replied by some that this description of the social ideal, and these reflections, descriptive of its character, assume conclusions which are drawn from premises that many may refuse to accept as valid and reasonable. It may even be contended that this description anticipates arguments, and gives to the social ideal a complexion which may or may not be justifiable. I am well aware of these objections, and, indeed, I state them frankly in order that the social ideal may be examined in full view of all that can be said against this presentation of it, as well as of all that may be stated in its favour.

It is for these reasons necessary that account should be taken of the *attitudes* adopted towards the social ideal by those who presumably have given the subject their attention, and have ventured to make a pronouncement upon it. These *attitudes* are severally the expressions of criticisms and of conclusions drawn from social phenomena. But the arguments which lie behind and support the positions which are chosen should be carefully examined. For it is all-important that one should understand as clearly as possible both the issues which are in dispute, and the character of the reasoning which is brought to bear upon them. The ground should thus be cleared for what may be urged respecting

the agencies by means of which the social ideal can be reached.

The possibility or impossibility of the attainment of the social ideal is *per se* a subject to which no intelligent person can be indifferent. At the present time, indeed, the problems of social life engross public attention. The wretched conditions under which tens of thousands of poor people eke out an existence have awakened sympathy; but in addition to evoking pity, these same conditions, when carefully examined, explain why many remedial measures have been propounded and tried. The theoretic economist, and the practical statesman, are alike engaged in trying to discover an effective remedy. It must, then, be a distinct advantage if we can ascertain in what manner the possibility of betterment is viewed, and especially what estimates are formed respecting the possibility or impossibility of the social ideal being attained.

I have offered a brief description of the social ideal, and have indicated what is present to the minds of those who intelligently speak of it being reached. Is the description accurate and reasonable? Are the premises which are assumed valid and defensible? Is there anything unwarrantably taken for granted in what has been stated? Are the conclusions justified? And, is the social ideal possible? I set out, with definite intention, these questions clearly. The points at issue can, without elaborate treatment, be easily perceived. The different attitudes adopted towards the social ideal can now, therefore, be examined.

II.

The Incredulous Attitude.—I take first those who declare against the possibility of the attainment of the social ideal. They do not all occupy identical ground in urging their objections; but their contention, briefly stated, is that the social ideal is nothing other than a pleasing, albeit a vain imagination of the optimist. This is said with great kindness, perhaps also with a touch of pity for the deluded optimist for whom nothing but disappointment is in store. It is, however, stated with absolute assurance. The dictum is stamped with finality, and all attempts at arguing the question are ruled out of court.

Who are they that make this statement? They are generally those who know nothing of hardships, of the *res angusta domi*. The severe pressure of poverty has not driven them to examine and reflect upon the economic and moral principles of which the present social life, with all its perplexing and baffling problems, is the expression. It is no injustice to these people to say that if their pronouncement is made with genuine feelings of commiseration, it is also uttered hastily and without warrant. A deeper view of the social anomalies of the day, and a personal experience of life's harsh conditions would, at least, suggest hesitancy.

But this statement is sometimes made by economists and philosophers; and since they commit themselves to making it, thoughtful attention should be given to their contention. The statement itself is a mere negation. It is seldom supported by any argument or evidence.

It is easily made, but extremely difficult either to prove or disprove. One is, therefore, aimlessly beating the air when one deals with this negation. The question at issue must, therefore, be examined from another point of view.

This can be easily done; for if account be taken of the admissions which those who commit themselves to the statement, that the social ideal is impossible of attainment, are obliged to make, the real value of their contention at once becomes apparent. Those, then, who maintain that the social ideal is nothing other than a vain imagination of the optimist are bound to admit that, as already stated,¹ if sufficiently long periods of time be selected, there is nothing more manifest than the progress which has been made in social conditions, and therefore in social life. It is true that the rate of progress has not always been uniform. Sometimes it has been so slow that the aptest illustration is *that* of the almost imperceptible movements of the hand of the clock. There have, indeed, been occasions when the hand of the clock seemed to go backwards; but this has been in appearance only; for, notwithstanding all retrogressions and failures, the social evolution goes on, and is ever making for a more and more perfect state of society.

No informed person can, then, hold that social progress has not been made. He may maintain that an idle dream is fondly cherished by all those who think or speak of society attaining to an ideal state; but that is a statement which proves nothing. If the possibility

¹ See p. 118.

of even a little progress be admitted ; and, further, if history, when a sufficiently long period of time is taken, witnesses to the steady though slow evolution of society, then it may be legitimately inferred that the social ideal will ultimately be reached.

Progress must either altogether cease, or if it goes on, the social goal must one day be attained. An indefinitely long period of time may elapse before final victory crowns the labours of those who strive for the perfection of social relationships ; but mere lapse of time cannot invalidate the arguments on which rest the hopes of those who labour for a perfected society.

The only effect which the knowledge of the need for a long period of persevering endeavours should produce is, *that* of making the perseverance more intelligent, definite, and thorough. This, therefore, instead of telling against the social ideal is all in its favour. No one at least should be discouraged. The social ideal is neither a vain imagination nor an idle dream, but a possibility which demands for its realisation a wholesome optimism and ceaseless efforts.

The task may be difficult, but it is not hopeless. The philosopher, with his broad outlook on life, may see most prominently, and perhaps only, the many fruitless intellectual controversies in which acute minds have engaged. But even he is obliged to admit that the restless human spirit in its search after knowledge has already apprehended great luminous truths, which are the guarantees of social betterment. If one turns to business men one finds that commercial pursuits of the day and keen competition may so engage their thoughts and energies

that they have neither time nor inclination to look beyond the present and ask, What is the social goal towards which all things are tending? But, again these are among the first to recognise that the present conditions of social life are altogether unsatisfactory and cannot be final. And if one descends to the lower strata of society one discovers there a bitter discontent with social environment, and a struggle for mere existence which are at once loud protests and also clear intimations of man's inalienable claims for such social conditions as will enable him to discharge his duties and enjoy his rights.

The incredulous may still persist in refusing to accept the possibility of the social ideal being reached; but they cannot set aside these conclusions, nor can they gainsay the arguments which their own enforced admissions construct in favour of the social ideal as attainable.

III.

The Cautious Attitude.—There is at the present time a large class of thinkers who, having given a careful study to economic principles and moral laws, deliberately decline to adopt a dogmatically antagonistic attitude in relation to the social ideal. These see in history's page a painful record of the baleful influence and disastrous results of the operations of the dogmatic spirit. But unlike some, who seem to believe that dogmatism has only prevailed in the theological realm, they recognise that the dogmatic spirit has been as persistent and intolerant in the social as it has been

in the theological sphere. There are indeed those who hold that in the social it has been more obstructive and hurtful; for, when dogmatic pronouncements are made respecting any social question, or any scheme of social amelioration, birth is at once given to prejudice, and the path of social progress is blocked and barred. The minds of publicists, economists, and politicians must be, they contend, cleared of prejudice; but this, they further say, is impossible so long as the dogmatic spirit obtains and is allowed free scope.

For these reasons they elect to adopt a cautious attitude. They cannot commit themselves to an expression of belief as to the possibility of the social ideal being reached; but, on the other hand, they declare it to be pre-eminently unreasonable to adopt an antagonistic attitude towards it. They hold their judgment in suspense and wait. They have an open mind. They are forward to admit that all ideals serve good and useful purposes, since ideals constitute a goal in striving towards which present attainments are but stepping-stones to higher degrees of perfection. But they cannot see the social ideal clearly, or perceive how economic principles can be satisfactorily adjusted in relation to it; and, therefore, while they are all for an open mind and the suppression of dogmatism, they at the same time cannot form a final judgment, or even a judgment which satisfies themselves respecting the possibility of the attainment of the social ideal.

It would mean much for social progress and for the right discussion of the questions which it raises were this attitude more generally adopted. For it allows ample

room for sympathy, which is one of the first and necessary conditions of the proper discussion of any subject, and is in a special manner required when those social questions, which touch deeply and immediately personal interests, are considered. It ministers also to discrimination, and predisposes those who adopt it to be ready to render whatever help lies within their power, and to hail with satisfaction all signs of social betterment. There is much, therefore, to be said for this attitude; and perhaps it is not altogether without justification when the complex conditions of social life are kept well in view.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SOCIAL IDEAL : ATTITUDES TOWARDS IT (*continued*).

I.

The Hopeful Attitude.—There are many who proceed far beyond the position described in the preceding chapter. They are full of hope. Their bright anticipations are based, in many instances, upon inductions drawn from the enormous progress that society has made. If this great progress be kept in view, they maintain that a perfect social life is thinkable, and, if thinkable, therefore also possible. They point also to the difference between man in a savage state of society, and man under the highly developed social conditions of to-day ; and they argue that the difference between what man now is, and what man under perfect social conditions may become, is not greater than that of man in a savage state and in present civilised social life. This, it is held, gives ample grounds for hopes, and, indeed, justifies their anticipations.

But a hopeful attitude is likewise adopted by many who, taking different grounds, hold that there is a Divine Purpose in human life, and that the existence of such a Purpose is strong presumptive evidence in favour of man ultimately attaining to a perfect social life. This Purpose, in their opinion, is altogether gracious ;

and, therefore, they conclude that it is God's design so to train and discipline man that he may be brought into harmony with the Divine Purpose, and be enabled to do the will of God on earth as His will is done in heaven.

Those who accept this interpretation of human life are among the first reverently to hail the Advent of Christ, and to see in the Incarnation the pledge and guarantee that brotherhood will be universally acknowledged and that society will be both regenerated and transformed. To them the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," means a prayer for the realisation of the reign of righteousness and love, the two qualities which carry with them the right to rule and reign. Human life, to those who thus read the Divine Purpose, is no longer a dark impenetrable mystery. It is illumined with a light in which hope respecting the ultimate perfection of society grows stronger, brighter, and more inspiring.

But there are also many who entertain hope for the betterment and ultimate perfection of society on the ground that man is the crown of creation, and as such, must ultimately reach an ideal state. These argue that if man's mental and moral powers be considered, not only will hope be deeply rooted, but the conviction will be firmly held that man must come to a perfect state.

They see all organised life reaching perfection, and they contend that if the beasts of the field and the birds of the air have their lives perfected, so man's mental and moral powers must also be perfected. But the conditions for such perfection must be found in social relationships.

The infinite potentialities of man's mental and moral life can indeed, they hold, only be developed in social life and by the discharge of social duties. Man, they say, must come to his own. The conditions under which his powers can be strengthened and perfected must be provided, while to them it is equally plain that the mental and moral powers themselves are clear intimations of the possibility of a perfected life ; and, therefore, hope is entertained by those who thus argue.

Within recent years this argument has received special attention. Philosophy has given distinctive prominence to it. It is said that man must realise his own life, and that all his powers, mental, moral, and physical, must be developed. But for the perfect realisation of his life man needs society. He cannot attain to perfection in isolation. He cannot, therefore, stand alone. He must find the conditions for the development of his life in the lives of his fellows. A perfected society must, therefore, be a possibility, otherwise man cannot realise his own life.

This conception of society is far from being either new or novel ; but, at the present time, and in the present state of philosophical inquiry, it has for many minds a powerful fascination. Those who come under its influence cannot be satisfied with anything less than a perfect social life. All attempts at social betterment on their part are made with the object of providing perfect social conditions for the realisation of man's own personal life.

Hence it has happened that some of the keenest social reformers are those who, on purely philosophic

grounds, have seen the necessity of trying to improve social life. The class-room or the private study may afford excellent opportunities for reflecting upon all that is deepest and truest in human life; but those who have the clearest vision of life's potentialities are often the first to enter the public arena, and on the common plane of human affairs try to improve the conditions under which life is realised. Hence their enlightened enthusiasm, and the hope which they entertain and cherish. This attitude is adopted by the majority of those who thoughtfully reflect upon and carefully examine the problems of social life, perhaps because the evidences in support of this attitude are numerous and convincing. These evidences cannot, indeed, be easily resisted.

But notwithstanding all that is thus held, it must not be assumed even for a moment that the advocates of an incredulous attitude will readily surrender *their* position, or allow that the arguments urged against them are valid. Their dogmatism is their defence.

As in other departments of life, however, enlightenment makes the retention of the dogmatic spirit impossible, so here also dogmatism is bound to yield to the ever-increasing light which is thrown upon social questions by the elucidation of economic and ethical principles. Besides, as already said, society must either advance or go backwards. It cannot remain stationary. Those who believe in its progress, while they are not ignorant of the harm which dogmatism does, or of the barriers which it throws in the way, are persuaded that better and better conditions of social improvement are being provided, and that society is making for its own ideal.

II.

The Confident Attitude.—With many hope passes into certainty. They see in the economic domain many proofs of the strong drift towards an ideal state. Collective efforts, they hold, are supplanting those of the individual. In their judgment, too, voluntary societies and joint-stock companies are preparing the way for the reign of collectivism. The increasing duties which corporations are discharging solely in the interests of rate-payers, and the socialistic Acts which Parliament passes every year, whether Liberals or Conservatives be in power, strengthen their already deeply-rooted conviction that society is making for a perfect social state.

Without pronouncing a judgment upon the claims of collectivism, one may easily perceive and state the contentions of those who thus argue. The Legislature, they say, is becoming more and more responsible for the education and health of the people. Corporations and voluntary societies, they affirm, are proving to demonstration that "what the people collectively need they should collectively hold and use"; and, therefore, they argue that the steady evolution, going on towards collectivism, carries with it practical benefits to the whole body of the people, and must ultimately issue in the realisation of a perfect social state.

But however strange it may at first sight appear, there is another school of economists, who stand as the poles asunder from collectivists, and yet adopt an equally confident attitude. The members of this school loudly and persistently proclaim their faith in individual-

ism. They profess to believe that society will reach its goal when absolute individualism obtains. These are your logical individualists. They have a large following. At least a great many men, publicists and politicians, condemn collectivism, and make no secret that they pin their faith to what they term the wholesome operations of individualism. The consistent among them see nothing praiseworthy in governmental or municipal management of any business affair. Many of them complain of the meddlesomeness of governments, and, like Marco Girolamo Vida, Bishop of Alba, and Rousseau, attribute most of the social evils of the day to the State.

The logical exponents of individualism would, if they had the power, abolish governments altogether. They aim at reducing government action to a minimum ; and they seem to believe that society can be best and most effectively improved along the line of the restriction of State interference. The more outspoken declare that if the individual enjoyed absolute freedom the social ideal would be reached. Absolute freedom from State control, and unconditional individual liberty, form, in their judgment, the only guarantees of an ideal society. Perfect anarchy is their conception of the society of the future.

III.

I make no comment, at this stage, upon the content of these two opposing economic theories. But it will be observed that many of those who adopt a

confident attitude in relation to the social ideal rest their claims almost exclusively upon economics.

A word of caution is, therefore, here again necessary. Economic science must be correctly apprehended. But its limits must also be rightly understood. It deals with the production, exchange, and distribution of commodities. It is, however, much more than an explanation of the principles which govern the production, exchange, and distribution of *goods*. Accordingly, its best exponents recognise that it assumes a moral basis. When, therefore, economic theories are discussed, morals must also be taken into account. For business transactions can only be successfully carried out where honour, credit, and reliability obtain. These are essentially moral qualities. Prominence must then be given to ethics. A materialistic evolution, however excellent and thorough it may be, is by no means all that is needed in order to realise an ideal social state. If one, therefore, looks to material things alone one cannot be confident as to the realisation of the social ideal.

All questions respecting the production, exchange, and distribution of *goods* are important and far-reaching in their effects; but, after all, this is only one part of social life. The distinctively ethical principles which lie at the root of economics must receive the fullest recognition. *Character* has a greater value than *condition*. These two, as I have already shown,¹ should not be placed in opposition. It is only the short-sighted who fail to see that the one implies the other; for

¹ See p. 81.

where there are sterling moral qualities they will make for right conditions, and where right conditions obtain they will react upon character and aid its development.

But when this has been said and recognised as true, it still holds good that *character* has a greater value than *condition*; and if so, then it must be admitted that a superabundance of material things, enjoyed by all, is not the guarantee of the social ideal. Man's life does not consist in the things which he *has*. What he *is* is far more essential, and makes a thousand times more effectively for life. Certainty, therefore, cannot be predicated of the social ideal if economics alone be taken into account.

At the present time, however, there is no more distinctive note of the drift of the thought of many social reformers than their insistence on materialistic formulæ. They seem to stake everything upon material conditions. If questioned, they would not, and do not, deny the importance which belongs to morals; but they are not all for ethics as they are all for economics. And in many instances they are wedded to a particular economic theory. The majority of them are advocates of collectivism.

Now, no one who has carefully watched the operations of economic principles, or has tested their value by an appeal to history and experience, can easily or lightly set aside the collectivist conception as that which makes for the social ideal; but individualism has its legitimate claims. In the past it has had, however, more than its own share of attention. In philosophy, business, and even in religion, it has almost reigned supreme; but

that is not an adequate justification for now setting it entirely aside. What is good in individual initiative and service must be recognised as well as all that is good in collectivism. One may see the defects of individualism without also being able to understand how moral and economic principles can adjust themselves in a socialistic State.

IV.

I have stated briefly what is meant by the social ideal. The content of the ideal may be susceptible of a fuller and more detailed treatment ; but enough has been said to indicate the goal towards which all social efforts must be directed. There are few people who experience any difficulty as to what it means whenever they set themselves to the task of picturing an ideal state of society. Some may for a time lay undue stress upon certain elements which enter into the ideal, as, for instance, is done by those who attach exclusive importance to material conditions ; but this mistake will be corrected as the social evolution proceeds ; for other factors will assert themselves and demand attention. I have, therefore, been careful to say that the moral and economic enter into the social ideal. If these two factors be kept well in view, the content of the social ideal, at least in its main features, will be apprehended.

But, when the ideal is described, the all-important questions at the present time are the *attitudes* which may be deliberately adopted towards the ideal, and the *agencies* which may be used in order to realise it. I have,

therefore, attempted a description of the more prominent attitudes which are chosen by those who have given attention to this subject. This is necessary, in the first instance, because every person who is engaged in social work, or interested in social problems should know what are the possible attitudes which may be adopted, and should also make choice of that attitude which seems to him to be most reasonable, and most amply justified by the teachings of history, economics, and philosophy.

Every person should indeed have his own perspective as clear as possible. He should know the ground upon which he stands. The drift and tendency of all social movements will then be more easily perceived, while a more accurate judgment will then also be more easily formed respecting all remedial schemes.

The agencies which may be employed in trying to realise the social ideal next deserve special consideration. I purpose, therefore, in the following chapters to examine these in detail.

CHAPTER XIII.

AGENCIES OF THE SOCIAL IDEAL: THEIR RELATIVE POSITIONS.

I.

ABSORBINGLY interesting, but also extremely complicated, questions arise whenever the content and character of the agencies by means of which the social ideal may be reached are examined. In any thorough investigation of these questions ethical theories must be postulated. The utmost care must also be taken to relate the one agency to the other agencies; and, in addition, the philosophic principles which are assumed when these agencies are discussed, must be closely examined.

I shall reserve for special treatment the whole question of ethics, since ethical principles and practice occupy a supreme position in the discussion of the social ideal. Attention will be given in this chapter to the agencies of social progress, and to the relation in which they stand to each other. In the following chapter the philosophic principles which are assumed to justify social agencies will be examined.

II.

There are three familiar terms which are employed alike by publicists and politicians when social agencies

are under consideration. The terms are *liberty*, *equality*, and *brotherhood*. All that these words connote, not only may, but should, enter into institutions and organisations which have for their chief end the good of the individual, and that also of society.

The general remark may be made that the advocates and exponents of these agencies attach the utmost importance to them. They indeed maintain that if all that their respective theories imply were realised, enormous social progress would be made ; and some of these advocates hold that thereby the social ideal would be reached.

British and Continental writers have discussed at great length the questions of liberty, equality and brotherhood. The former generally lay stress upon *liberty* ; the latter emphasise *equality*. Within recent years, however, an ever-increasing volume of public sentiment and judgment both at home and abroad is strongly in favour of an attempt to make a synthesis of the content of these agencies under the term *brotherhood*. This attempt is a distinctive note of modern sociology. It is contended, and not without good reason, that if the spirit of brotherliness prevailed all that is implied in liberty and equality would be realised. This spirit supplies the motive power to disinterested service. Where it obtains, encroachments on the rights of others are rendered impossible and inequalities are no longer tolerable.

The preference for *brotherhood* is seen in many quarters, but nowhere more notably than among the great modern poets, who are great just because they

have keen insight into principles of moral action, and can, as they trace the operations of these principles, anticipate the future state of society. Poets like Burns, Tennyson, and Lowell have sung the praises of liberty, a theme which can never cease to appeal to the free and to lovers of freedom; but they have risen to higher altitudes, and have touched with defter hand the harmonies of the moral universe when they have sung of the all-persuasive and winsome power of brotherhood. Their songs of freedom, always bold and captivating, may be compared with their songs of brotherhood, and it will be seen that the difference of the theme chosen also often explains the difference of the insight which is displayed, and the finer touch which is felt.

Liberty, in the sense of national freedom, is a fascinating subject, and appeals to patriotic feelings; but it has its distinct limits, and, so far as it is limited by national interests, the fervour which it awakens is circumscribed. Brotherhood, on the other hand, is universal. Man, as such, has claims upon his fellow-men without respect to time or place. The bonds of humanity unite together all people and nations; and when, therefore, universal brotherhood is the subject of the poet's song, there are no limits to the flights of his imagination. He touches the chords of the human heart, and men and women, without distinctions of race or land or time, respond to his song. The wider field gives also larger scope for insight. He speaks to the race: and the race are his debtors.

III.

But while recognising this preference for brotherhood the functions of the other factors of social progress must not be overlooked. They are not isolated, but intimately related to each other. Their close relationship and interdependence, therefore, deserve special consideration.

It is true, that the factors of social progress have often been separated. When, for example, they have been examined in an academic spirit, and apart from actual social needs, the one has not infrequently been placed in sharp opposition to the others. The injury which is then done cannot be calculated. Again, the history of social development supplies many instances of earnest reformers, and even enlightened publicists, laying undue stress upon one factor and neglecting the others. With great insistence they have advocated the application of theories which are not so much false as defective. History, therefore, records the result of their labours to throw light upon social problems and to effect social progress, as *failure*.

The scientific spirit of the age, which is itself the offspring of an enlarged view of the philosophy of human life, offers an emphatic warning against all attempts to separate the agencies of social progress. The conception of the unity, which lies beneath phenomena and is really *that* which reconciles apparent differences, has been a most useful aid to those exponents of physical science who have carried on research work, and have been led step by step to perceive that order is stamped upon all nature. It is also well known that nothing save

confusion reigned in mental science until philosophers were taught to recognise the unity of the mind.

Philosophy, therefore, as well as physical science reads the social worker an important lesson. He also needs a principle of reconciliation ; and a great step towards it is taken when he recognises that in no sense are the terms liberty, equality, and brotherhood, and all that they connote, mutually exclusive. They have an intimate relationship to each other, and are knit together by a unity as profound as that which obtains in the physical and mental realms. This unity must, therefore, always be kept well in view.

If an attempt were made to describe their relationship, there is ample justification for saying that liberty is the *positive*, equality the *comparative*, and brotherhood the *superlative* agency of social progress.

The intimate relationship of these agencies has not hitherto been sufficiently recognised, with the result that members of one school have needlessly pitted themselves against those of another. If, indeed, the history of past discussion be recalled, it will be seen that some have decided for liberty as the sole agency of social development. These have refused to give to equality its rightful place. Their very insistence upon liberty has prevented them from perceiving what is due to equality as an agency of social betterment. But, on the other hand, the advocates of equality have often been blind to the claims of liberty, and have robbed themselves of a most effective means of social improvement. There is absolutely nothing in the one which is opposed to the other. They can be simultaneously pursued.

Efforts may be made to realise both, and those who strive for their sway are never likely to find themselves in opposing camps.

It is only in abstract discussion that room is found for opposition, though even there it cannot be justified. There it has prevailed; but when the respective advocates of liberty and equality deal with the facts of social life, their isolating conceptions receive little support.

IV.

It is not, however, enough to contend for the agreement of these two agencies of social progress. A further step must be taken. Both can and should be used; both are needed in the wide fields of social life. Each has, it is true, its own place and function; but the one is complementary to the other. They can, therefore, be mutually helpful. The one facilitates the work of the other.

If assent be given to these statements, it is now possible to perceive more clearly the relative positions of liberty, equality, and brotherliness. It need scarcely be said that to co-ordinate these agencies is highly useful. The task, indeed, is worthy the best endeavours which can be made. If it can be rightly performed, and if the conclusions which are reached be generally accepted, the whole question of social improvement, and the attainment of the social ideal, will be brought down from the region of abstractions, and will be examined in the light both of the facts of social life and of the agencies which may be employed to improve, and ultimately to perfect,

society. In any case, an attempt to co-ordinate the agencies of social betterment is a necessary preliminary to an adequate treatment of the content of the three great terms—liberty, equality, and brotherhood.

I begin, then, by describing liberty as the positive agency of social progress. I do this not because I assign to liberty a subordinate place, but because it comes first in point of time and is the foundation of the claims of equality. When liberty is thus described those who have a passion for freedom should not hastily conclude that aught of the honour, or of the great worth which belongs to liberty, is denied to it. All that I contend for is, that liberty must be defined and guaranteed before the privileges of equality can be conferred and enjoyed. Liberty precedes equality and prepares its way.

Little difficulty, I apprehend, will be encountered in gaining assent to the precedence of liberty; but perhaps more debatable questions are raised when liberty is described as the positive agency of social progress in the sense that it is an active quality. It is first in point of time, and it is *that* on which equality rests; but is it also a positive and an active agent? It may be said at once that there are those who describe liberty as negative. This is, indeed, the position of all who regard liberty as chiefly concerned with "the absence of restraints." But it is much more than freedom from interference.

When one tries to ascertain the nature and functions of liberty, no greater mistake could be made than for one to conclude that liberty is only and merely freedom from restraints. Liberty in a very restricted sense may

be thus described; but far more is included in the term. For liberty is directly and powerfully positive. It implies, says Sir James Stephen, "the presence of some distinct original power acting unconstrainedly in a direction which the person using the word regards as good."¹ Professor Ritchie discusses at considerable length the question of liberty, and after an exhaustive treatment decides for the view that liberty is both negative and positive.² His observations are amply justified; for liberty, while it contains the idea of absence of restrictions, also expresses the idea of making for a definite end, and is therefore positive.

It will be seen when the content of the *term* is examined that liberty cannot be rightly apprehended unless the positive element receive prominence; but meantime its positive functions may be assumed, for otherwise its whole province cannot be described.

It is now possible, keeping these observations in view, for one to have a clear idea of the position which liberty occupies as an agency of social progress. An important contribution to the co-ordination of the factors of social betterment is indeed made when liberty is seen as coming first; and when, further, its positive aspect is clearly apprehended.

V.

The position which equality occupies as an agency of social improvement must next be ascertained. It is some-

¹ See *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*, p. 172.

² See *Natural Rights*, pp. 138-9.

what difficult to define the relation of equality to liberty, or even to limit one's attention to its chief functions without at the same time discussing the content of the term *equality*. I do not, however, wish to anticipate what it may be needful to say when the meaning of this term is under consideration; but here, at least, it is necessary to affirm that equality is not a question of the distribution of the means of "material happiness"; it is not at all a question of happiness, but of the means and opportunities of realising the maximum of material and moral betterment, of *welfare* and *well-being*.

Taking the term in this sense it is at once perceived that equality is an even more distinctively positive factor than liberty. It is also, as an agency, comparatively higher. It has as its aims the removal of all obstacles to the realisation of the people's well-being, and also at the same time the guarantee of all their legitimate rights. To pursue these aims manifestly necessitates comparatively high endeavours. This comparative element, its degree and direction, must then be kept well in view if the functions of equality, and the place which equality holds in the co-ordination of social agencies, are to be rightly understood.

I exclude, for the moment, all references to controversial questions. I am aware that whenever "rights" are named some theory of justice must be postulated. To this I shall return¹ at a later stage, but here it is permissible to say that equal opportunities of securing welfare and well-being are due to all; for otherwise a moral basis on which obligations rest cannot be found.

¹ See pp. 208-9.

All may not be equally endowed with mental and physical powers, or placed in the same advantageous social position ; but given the endowments, whatever they may be, and the positions which are occupied, opportunities must be provided, and be available for each person to realise the maximum of welfare and well-being.

This is a great claim which is legitimately made on behalf of equality. It is often misstated, and travesties of its objects are therefore easily made. But this claim, rightly presented, leaves room for diversities of gifts and of situations. It takes account of people being differently endowed and differently placed in the social scale. It also carries with it this great advantage, that if opportunities were given to all to make the utmost use of their gifts and of their situations, unjustifiable inequalities would soon vanish, and positions of social privileges would be less and less accentuated.

Fidelity to the right use of one's gifts is required on the one hand ; and on the other, fair opportunities for exercising them are demanded. Where these two things obtain equality justifies itself, and its character cannot be travestied, unless by the ignorant. I make this brief statement of the nature of equality in order to show that its functions are of a very high order, and that there is good reason for describing it as comparatively higher in the scale of social agencies than liberty. As already stated, liberty precedes equality and prepares its way. Men must enjoy freedom before they can do justice to the claims of equality.

VI.

Brotherhood is the highest and the superlative agency of social progress. Under this category liberty and equality find both their motive, and also the legitimate spheres for their exercise. These agencies of social betterment can indeed only be explained and justified when they are interpreted in terms of brotherhood.

Brotherhood may be described as in point of time preceding liberty and equality, for it is the inspiring power of both of these agencies. But in another sense it comes after them, and is the highest agency. A profound sense of brotherhood and of all that it implies makes for that freedom of each which is consistent with the good of all, and at the same time renders unjustifiable inequalities impossible.

It is not necessary to advert at length to the high functions which all who come under the influence of brotherhood, and obey its behests, are enabled to discharge. Brotherhood is altogether attractive; it thinks of others first; it sets their interests before its own. It is also at once the cause and explanation of self-sacrifice. It is rooted in the purest affection; and there are therefore no services which it refuses to undertake, if these have as their end the amelioration of the lot of the suffering, or the moral elevation of those who are sunk in vice. Brotherhood is therefore rightly described as the superlative agency of social progress. It is the greatest and the strongest, and in the ultimate attainment of the social ideal it must play the most prominent part.

Some may, however, contend that brotherhood is not an actual and vital power in the wider fields of social life. It tells effectively, they admit, in the family ; but beyond the family limits, they hold, it does not really operate. Those who thus contend cannot, however, gainsay the facts that men share a common nature with their fellow-men, and that sacred bonds unite them to each other ; that in moments of peril, and before a common danger, men are drawn to each other ; that they have common wants and common aims ; and that, therefore, these common possessions lay a broad basis for brotherhood and prove its reality.

The strong tendency to look each upon one's own, and to gather all things to oneself ; the false ideals which men have set up and eagerly pursued ; and the false teachings of the schools for which a narrow and one-sided philosophy of life is largely responsible, may explain the wrong course which individuals and nations have followed, and may likewise give plausible support to the contention that brotherhood is not an active power in social life. But when all is said and allowed which can be stated and contended for, it is still beyond dispute that man must deny his humanity before he can deny his brotherhood.

It is long since the Stoics perceived this truth ; it is also long since Christianity reaffirmed and enlarged the conception of brotherhood. The concrete wants of men to-day are emphasising it ; and there is the strongest reason for cherishing the belief that with the lapse of time, and the inculcation of worthy ideals on a large scale, brotherhood will prove its power to impel men to

the highest and most disinterested service; and thus also give evidence that it is the superlative agency of social welfare and well-being.

The relation in which the three great factors of social progress stand to each other must now be evident. I have been obliged to indicate the content of these factors in order to bring out clearly their relationship. This has been done as briefly as possible. What each factor contains will be examined in detail; but at the present moment my special object is to show how, and in what way they are related to each other.

There are organisations, such as the State and Municipal Corporations, the Church and Voluntary Societies, through which these factors of social progress operate. It is an interesting study to try to ascertain how far the efficiency of each of these organisations depends upon the conceptions which are entertained respecting liberty, equality, and brotherhood; and upon the endeavours which are made to do adequate justice to each agency. For, it should be carefully noted that liberty, equality, and brotherhood are powerful agencies, and that they, whatever views are entertained as to their respective claims, are constantly and directly telling upon society.

To many, perhaps to the majority even, of those who are deeply interested in social betterment, and are doing their utmost to improve social life, the relationship of these agencies and their operations may never have been, and at the present time may not be, subjects of study and reflection. But none the less are they very real agencies which mould organisations and direct the

labours of all who belong to them. Since these things hold good, it must then be a great advantage to all who are concerned with the betterment of society that they give prominence to these agencies, and especially that they clearly apprehend the relationship which the agencies sustain, the one to the others.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOCIAL AGENCIES : THE NEED OF PHILOSOPHIC PRINCIPLES.

I.

HAVING described the relationship of the social agencies, I must now, according to the plan outlined in the preceding chapter, advert briefly to the philosophic principles which inspire these agencies with vitality and give direction to them. It is legitimately assumed that philosophic principles should govern the discussion of the claims of liberty, equality, and brotherhood. It is further taken for granted that if right principles be ascertained and adopted, wise direction will be given to social endeavours, and a rational explanation of social life will be possible.

It should not, however, be forgotten that there are some who would banish the initial questions of philosophy altogether from the discussion of social agencies. This is the position not only of the successful man of business, who has neither time nor inclination for broad generalisations, but also of some writers who rightly claim to speak with authority respecting the origin and end of social institutions. Thus, Stuart Mill begins his book *On Liberty*, by saying that the philosophic doctrine of *The Freedom of the Will* should be excluded from all dis-

cussions of *liberty*, and that attention should be directed solely to man in his social relationships.

I shall show in a moment that Mill did not exclude his own moral theory from the investigation of *liberty*; but here it may be pointed out that very notable are the admissions which he makes in an Essay on "Social Freedom," recently brought to light and published in the *Oxford and Cambridge Review*.¹ This Essay is a mere fragment of what seems to have been a contemplated larger work, but it is valuable as showing that there must be some theory of individual freedom before social freedom can be understood.

"We find people," Stuart Mill observes, "acting under the impulse of a variety of motives, some of which we feel to be higher and more worthy to rule men's actions than others." Now, the feeling of "higher and more worthy" motives must have its origin somewhere; society may confirm, but cannot create it. The feeling is subjective, and therefore some philosophic theory must be assumed before it can be rightly interpreted.

The method adopted by Stuart Mill is also that which is chosen by Dr Mackinnon when he clears his way to an examination of *liberty* in the field of history.²

It is, however, somewhat doubtful whether a rigid distinction can be made between philosophic and historical investigations; for it will be observed that in almost all treatises, even in those which profess to exclude philosophy, postulates of a philosophic character are constantly assumed in the interpretation of historical and current events. This is, indeed, necessary, for the

¹ June 1907.

² See Preface to his *History of Modern Liberty*.

factors of social life need to be defined, or, at least, described; and whenever an attempt is made to define or describe them the aid of philosophic theories must be sought.

II.

The necessity for such theories becomes still more apparent when it is recalled that in the discussion of liberty, equality, and brotherhood the interests not only of the individual, but also those of others, must be carefully weighed. But in trying to ascertain what are the principles which make for both interests, and how the principles operate or co-operate, some philosophic theory is demanded. Not otherwise can a right explanation be offered.

Take, for instance, the question of *liberty*. Personal liberty, it is recognised on all sides, is in the first instance conditioned by subjective states. A man is free to will as he chooses, but his prevailing affections often determine his choice of a given course of action. If, say, in the exercise of his freedom he wills to do a certain thing, his desires may override the will, with the result that he does something else instead of that which he willed to do. Thus personal liberty is largely determined by desires which are purely subjective.

But, as everyone knows, feelings play an important part in the discussion of moral theories. Some, as will be seen, over-estimate them, but no writer on ethics can neglect them. They are made by one school to lie at the root of all conceptions respecting liberty. Without giving to them such a predominant place, it may be said

that unless some philosophic theory of the feelings be postulated, all discussions of liberty and all reviews of its historical operations must be defective.

It need scarcely be added that with a defective interpretation of personal liberty the discussion of the liberty which is due to others must also be defective. You cannot overlook the unity of human life ; and, notwithstanding the *dictum* of Stuart Mill, man as he *is* must be understood before man in his relationships to his fellows can be made a subject of profitable investigation. The neglect of psychological analysis here, as elsewhere, has led to many misreadings of history.

Or, take again the subjects of equality and brotherhood. The same need for a philosophic interpretation of these agencies, both in their origin and subsequent operations, is apparent whenever an attempt is made to ascertain their place and functions in social life. Equality, for instance, cannot be understood apart from some theory of justice¹ ; but justice itself is essentially a question for moral philosophy ; and some moral theory must therefore be deliberately adopted before the nature of equality, and the claims made on its behalf, can be adequately discussed. Without, indeed, such a theory social phenomena cannot be accurately read ; and the wide province within which equality operates must remain a *terra incognita*.

Brotherhood, in the same manner and for the same reason, necessitates the adoption of a moral theory. Otherwise it cannot be properly understood as an active factor of social life. For, to attempt to answer such

¹ See pp. 154 and 208-10.

questions as, "What is the impelling and controlling power of brotherly service?" "Why is it highly justifiable to seek the interests of others first, and before one's own interests?" takes us at once into the moral realm where some theory is necessary. A theory *must be* adopted, unless, indeed, one can be content to deal with the facts of social life without any rational interpretation of their meaning, and without any justification for what one attempts or advises others to try by way of realising the social ideal.

Without in the meantime entering into a lengthened argument, I decide for that philosophic principle according to which man, if he is to realise his life, must pursue a high moral *end*. Man is, however, free to choose as he wills, subject to the dictates of his moral sense, and the influence of his feelings. This theory enables one to find a place for individual freedom, which is the basis of liberty in social life. It also helps one to explain the elements which enter into the complex phenomena of society; and, at the same time, it leaves ample room for liberty, equality, and brotherhood to operate. A few sentences will exhibit what reasons may be adduced for making such large claims on behalf of this theory.

III.

When epistemology is applied to metaphysics—that is, when theories of knowledge are applied to mental phenomena—the individual is seen to be both independent and free. He is not passive in thought. He is gifted with the power of initiative. For lack of a better name

this power is designated *spontaneity*. The thought-originating cause cannot, however, be explained; but it exists in the consciousness of every individual. The will is consciously free. Reason obeys its dictates, and is indeed, in the opinion of some, an exercise of will.

This native and inalienable freedom of the will must be maintained if the facts of consciousness are to be explained. But the will is constantly under the influence of the feelings. The large part which *feeling* plays has misled many exponents of mental and moral science. They make everything to turn upon *feeling*, and interpret all moral actions in its terms.

This is done not only by Bentham and Bain, Mill and Spencer, but also by representative writers on philosophy at the present time.

Mr Bradley, for instance, in his revolt against Hegel and his school, sets aside will as nothing other than "the self-realisation of an idea," and makes it one of the forms or phases of thought. Thought, he argues, involves relations, and these again imply contradictions. He therefore sets aside both will and thought, and to a great extent interprets mental phenomena in terms of *feeling*. Dr Laurie, in his *Gifford Lectures*, refuses to have anything to do with such an analysis and conclusion. He rightly insists upon the functions of will, and maintains that Will-Reason is the chief note of personality. Mr Henry Sturt, in his *Idola Theatri*, makes the pertinent remark that Mr Bradley "has deliberately selected the least rational element of human experience" in his interpretation of mental and moral phenomena.

I cite the utterances of these recent expositors of

philosophy in order to exhibit their respective attitudes. The effort to make *feeling* dominate all things is very persistent. It is made to interpret the individual, and its claims in the social sphere are strongly emphasised when it is made to justify utilitarian economics.

The undue stress which is laid on *feeling* should not, however, be allowed to bias one's judgment against its legitimate claims. Moral actions cannot be resolved into *feeling*; but at the same time the prominent part which it plays must be recognised.

The will is free; but man must pursue a high moral *end*. The mind is an entity. It is not made up of so many "faculties." An imperfect psychology at one time encouraged this misconception. Given the unity of the mind a worthy goal becomes a necessity. Man must come to his own: he must realise his life. This is only possible by doing justice to the content of his moral consciousness and by striving after an ideal which the mind conceives, and demands as essential to the realisation of the life of the individual, and also of healthy social relationships.

These are truths supported by the testimony of consciousness and approved by experience; but it must be repeated that the affections and dispositions should not be overlooked. They are ever asserting their power; if they are pure and good, will and actions are directed to the good; if they are bad, will and actions, in a very marked degree, take their colour and direction from them; and a man is as his affections are. "Out of the heart are the issues of life."

To what extent a moral theory, based on an inter-

pretation of mental states, is needed is evidenced by what Stuart Mill has attempted in his work, *On Liberty*. His theory of utility, which rests on *feeling*, runs through all his investigations. "I regard," he says, "utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions."¹ One cannot, indeed, exclude one's moral theory from the discussion of social relationships; Stuart Mill's own position shows the impossibility of the exclusion; but the acceptance of a moral theory involves also the adoption of a philosophic interpretation of mental phenomena. The profound unity which is stamped upon man's whole life forbids a separation of the moral from the mental.

IV.

When, therefore, one deals with social agencies one must at the same time examine the philosophic principles which give them support. Agencies and principles of action go together. Accordingly, it is found that almost all who have tried to understand social life, and have taken their part in the task of social betterment, hold by some moral theory, which again implies an interpretation of mental states.

Inspiration to social service accompanies, it should be remembered, all moral endeavours. Without this inspiration the task would be difficult and dreary; but the task is still more lightened when one has a clear conception of the basis on which one's moral theory

¹ People's Edition, p. 6.

rests, and also of the great aid which is enjoyed when all social work is seen in its unity.

Without a philosophic theory of the individual and of society social agencies are, indeed, meaningless. Neither liberty, nor equality, nor brotherhood can be rightly understood unless they be apprehended as expressions of moral and economic principles; and therefore I have urged that if these great agencies of social betterment are to be advantageously employed, the philosophic theories on which they rest must be kept well and prominently in view. The need of such theories is based alike on man's nature, and on the character of the social work which he performs. This will be still more evident when, in the following chapter, an examination is made of the foundation of liberty.

CHAPTER XV.

SOCIAL AGENCIES : LIBERTY, ITS FOUNDATION, CHARACTER, AND LIMITS.

IN discussing *liberty* as an agency of social progress, it will make for clearness of treatment if it be recognised that there are three separate questions to which attention should be directed. These are—*first*, the foundation upon which liberty rests ; *second*, the character and limits of liberty ; and *third*, the provinces of human life within which its claims are made and urged.

I shall take these in their order, and attempt an examination of them.

I.

The Foundation upon which Liberty rests. — An agency of social improvement so powerful as liberty must have a solid basis. It is not an airy abstraction respecting which discussions may be carried on without regard to its foundation in fact and theory. Because it is intensely real, it must rest on real grounds. Some may urge that this is an unimportant question ; but, as already indicated, much of the confusion and uncertainty which prevails is due to writers not having clear conceptions of the basis on which liberty rests and makes its appeals.

I must, then, revert for a moment to statements in

the preceding chapter in order to show that a foundation for liberty can only be secured by psychological analysis. Psychology is indeed all important for the right interpretation of liberty.

Man is free; he is also conscious of his power of initiative. He is likewise conscious of his responsibility for the use which he makes of his power of initiative, and of the thoughts and actions which are its outcome. Certain inalienable rights, again, rest upon his responsibility; for, if he is accountable for the exercise of his power of initiative, he must also have his rights, of which he cannot justly be deprived.

But man's duties and rights cannot be explained in terms of one of the mind's manifestations alone. Thought, will, and feeling—that is, all the manifestations of the mind—must be taken into account. If all duties and rights be resolved, say, into feeling alone, only a part, and that part, too, which is the most variable and uncertain, is taken. A synthesis of the mental and moral powers must, therefore, be made. Man in his totality, and in the unity of his personality, must be dealt with; but at the same time it is permissible to single out the most prominent mental and moral power, and find a fitting place in relation to it for the other powers.

Will, for instance, may be taken as the most distinctive “note” of personality. Within the last two or three years there has been a return to *will* on the part of prominent German thinkers. British writers, guided by Green and Caird, have given prominence to *spirit*, as against the postulates of utilitarianism; and quite recently pragmatism with its insistence upon “the work-

able" has offered an explanation of personality and morals. Some British writers have also reproduced in popular language the affirmations of German thinkers who are all for naturalism; but it is in Germany to-day that *will* is again emphasised. This is seen in Karl Joël's two remarkable books, *Der Freie Wille, Eine Entwicklung in Gesprächen*, and *Der Ausgang der Moderne*, and also in Dr Münsterberg's *Philosophie der Werte*, now translated by the author and issued under the title, *The Eternal Values*.

It should be added that determinism, with its insistence upon heredity and environment, for a time held the field. Naturalism in one or other of its forms, and in all departments of life, was supreme. Philosophy and sociology were under its influence not less than were science and literature, fiction and the drama. But determinism cannot explain human life. The organic asserts its claims as against the mechanical. Man is gifted with the power of exercising his will. He can originate thoughts and give them direction. *Feeling* has its place, but if anyone holds that thoughts can, and do, come into being at the bidding of feeling, it must be added that thoughts so called forth cannot have any moral content, for feeling is a blind impulse, and, unguided by will, is the most unreliable of all the powers.

But here psychology must give guidance; and liberty must in the first instance be interpreted by psychological analysis. When this analysis is made, evidence lies to hand that the will is free, and that liberty rests upon the whole content, and the profound unity of

personality. This is the basis on which man claims liberty of conscience, liberty of thought and action, liberty of opinion and sentiment, of tastes and pursuits. It must, however, be remembered that the exercise of liberty in relation to any one of these things is always accompanied with responsibility; and that man, *just because he is accountable*, must also be free. The importance of this postulate will be apparent in a moment.

II.

The Character and Limits of Liberty. — In the exercise of one's will the question next arises respecting the character and limits of liberty. Various definitions have been attempted. Thus, it is said that the individual should be allowed to do whatever he *wills*, so long as he does not infringe the equal liberty of other individuals; that he should be allowed to do anything which entails no harm to others; that liberty should extend to that point where the liberty of other citizens begins; that self-protection alone can justify interference with individual liberty; and that liberty means the securing for each man "the fullest freedom to exercise his faculties compatible with the like freedom to all others."

1. These definitions, or, rather, these descriptions of liberty, have been popularised by many recent writers. It is interesting to note their origin. In modern times Kant was the first to state and defend them. "Let thine external actions," he said, "be such that the free

use of thy will may co-exist with the freedom of everybody, according to a universal law." ¹

Stuart Mill makes his theory of "self-protection" a vital principle in all his discussions of liberty. "The sole end," he says, "for which mankind are warranted individually or collectively in interfering with the liberty of the action of any of their number is self-protection." And again he writes: "The only part of the conduct of anyone for which he is amenable to society is that which concerns others. In the part which concerns himself his independence is of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign." ²

Spencer identifies this claim to liberty with his own formula of justice, though here, as in his controversies with Huxley, whom he charged with the presumption of teaching "me my own doctrines," ³ he is unwilling to admit that anyone could have anticipated him. ⁴ He had apparently not heard, observes Professor Ritchie, of "the still earlier anticipation of his own formula in the French Declarations." ⁵ It ought, however, to be said that Spencer claimed to have verified his formula by an investigation of experience. Given his postulates, this may be allowed. But to complete this brief review attention needs to be called to Professor Edward Caird's luminous exposition of Kant's *dictum*. ⁶ The late Master

¹ Handle äusserlich so dass der freie Gebrauch deiner Willkühr mit der Freiheit von Jedermann nach einem allgemeinen Gesetze zusammen bestehen kann.—Hartenstein's ed., vol. vii., pp. 27-28.

² *Liberty*, Introduction, p. 14.

³ *Various Fragments*, p. 117.

⁴ *Principles of Ethics*, vol. iv., Appendix A.

⁵ *Natural Rights*, p. 142.

⁶ *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii. p. 319.

of Balliol has made Kant's contribution to the explanation of social relationships common property.

Now the question arises, What is the value of these definitions or descriptions of the character and limits of liberty? It may be said at once that they are good and valid up to a certain point. But many reservations need to be made. They cannot explain all conduct. Whenever they are submitted to a searching and impartial investigation many flaws are discovered.

"Liberty to all," for instance, often runs directly counter to "liberty to each," because the interests of the one on many occasions clash with those of others. Again, the field of human activities, of duties and privileges, is far wider than that which self-regarding actions cover, even when regard for the liberty of others is scrupulously kept in view. All law, too, is an enforced curtailment of individual liberty; but laws are rightly imposed when they guarantee greater benefits than could be realised if none were enacted.

Or, if historical examples be taken, defects become at once still more manifest. Thoreau, abolitionist and hermit of Walden Wood, attempted a practical illustration. He held that individual liberty necessitated, if it was to be consistently carried out, isolation, and disregard of social usages, such as allegiance to the State, working for one's family, and the like. Stuart Mill saw no tyranny in forcing parents to send their children to school; but Mill's theory of "all liberty to each and like liberty to all" would not permit such compulsion, even though it be admitted that children cannot become good citizens without education.

Whenever the conception of "public interests" is introduced, that of "liberty to each" is at least partially excluded. In the name of "public interests," for instance, schools, hospitals, prisons, and asylums are built, but these all trench upon the province of individual liberty. They limit the sphere of freedom to do what one likes. Again, the punishment of crime and the protection of citizens in the enjoyment of private property necessitate certain invasions of individual liberty.

All these things are done with the approbation of the overwhelming majority of people in every enlightened community. They are done because the welfare and wellbeing of society demand them ; but when they are enforced there is nothing more manifest than the restrictions which they place upon individual liberty.

The limits, indeed, within which individual freedom to do what one likes are enjoyed in a rightly constituted society are well-defined ; for, when it is argued that a person may do what he likes, and that he may even injure himself, so long as he does not injure his fellows, there are few who will allow that this contention is legitimate. The claim, for instance, is sometimes made that neither the criminal law nor public opinion should visit with disapprobation and punishment those who gamble, since, if injury be done at all, it is done only to the person who voluntarily engages in gambling ; but in certain well-defined instances the law punishes gamblers ; and public opinion is always against those who secure large sums of money for a minute amount of labour. These do not work legitimately for their "gains." They are for the most part living an idle life, and they

create for themselves temptations which they can scarcely ever resist. On these grounds public opinion sets itself against gamblers, and thus the limits of individual liberty are narrowed.

But public opinion, which is largely a question of self-preservation, is not the only deterrent against doing what one likes. Conduct must, indeed, be placed in categories far wider than that of prudential considerations of self-preservation. Self-protection may govern many actions; but it is far from embracing all, and far also from being able to lay down laws which may regulate society.

2. There are accordingly wider categories into which many moral actions naturally fall. Thus, there are actions dictated by fear of punishment and hopes of reward. Criminal law rests to a large extent upon its deterrent character and influence. Punishment is assumed to meet the ends of justice; but it is also inflicted with the object of deterring the wrong-doer and others from committing crime. Many actions, therefore, are dictated by fear of punishment. Religion, too, is sometimes made to rest upon fear, and also upon hopes of reward. The highest forms of religion, however, do not so much appeal to fear and hopes as to moral instincts and the moral end of life. The truly religious are the truly devotional, and devotion is never the offspring of either fear or hopes of reward alone. Devotion is born of love, and love demands for its object a person who can reciprocate the affection. Religion, therefore, in its most perfect manifestations rests upon ethical instincts and an ethical end; but

while this holds universally true, it must also be said that many religions appeal almost exclusively to fear of punishment and hopes of reward. Accordingly, many moral actions are dictated by these motives. There is nothing illegitimate in such motives, though it should be carefully noted that the ethically best actions cannot spring from them. Fear of punishment and hope of reward, then, form a wide category into which many moral actions fall. This category is quite distinct from that of self-protection.

3. But since the ethically best actions do not belong to either of these two categories, another and a still more comprehensive category must be found. This is at once provided when it is recognised that the highest voluntary moral actions are those inspired by a moral *end*. These actions may carry with them great rewards. They are not, however, performed for the sake of the rewards, but because man can only realise all that is deepest and truest in his nature by pursuing a high moral ideal. Again, pleasure or happiness may accompany the performance of these actions, but neither the one nor the other is their inspiring cause. The highest moral actions cannot be resolved into hedonism or eudæmonism. The attempt has often been made thus to explain them ; but it has failed, and that because many moral actions are performed which cannot be accounted for on the principles of either *pleasure* or *happiness*.

III.

Now, if a satisfactory basis for liberty is to be found, it must be sought for in something, not necessarily *opposed*

to self-protection or to motives of fear of punishment and hopes of reward, but in something *additional* to these factors. Liberty in the last resort must rest upon what man *is*, upon what is fundamental to him, and not upon what is merely accidental or follows as consequences of his actions. When liberty is thus treated, ample room is found for all moral actions; for those due to self-protection; for those dictated by fear of punishment and hopes of reward; and also for those inspired by a high moral *end*.

If this statement as to liberty be accepted, it follows that in formulating a theory of liberty, account must be taken of the ability and freedom to will which every person is conscious of possessing, and which always carries with them definite responsibilities; of the sense of right and wrong which is given in the constitution of man's nature; and also of the high moral *end* which man instinctively strives after in order to realise his life. All these things belong to man; they lie within his experience. They enter deeply into right conceptions of personality, and they constitute a valid basis both for personal liberty and moral accountability.

The return to man, as the latest researches of psychologists reveal him, is all-important. When Stuart Mill, discussing liberty, bade away from the field of his investigations all questions relative to the freedom of the will, he banished what is most constituent in man's nature, and also what is most essential to the elucidation of this subject. The example which he set has led many astray, and many false issues have therefore been raised. Thus, as already seen, attempts

have been made to explain society in terms of utility alone. But even when utility is taken, not in the sense which Hobbes gave to it as *egoistic*, but in Mill's sense as *altruistic*, just because even then it leaves many actions unaccounted for, a return to man himself is a first necessity. Man's powers, which are surely the ultimate basis of any claims to liberty which he makes, must be understood ; and the results of the most careful psychological analysis of these powers must be accepted as working formulæ in all investigation respecting the character and limits of liberty.

But all that the individual knows himself to be, to possess, and to strive after, is also common to his fellow-men. The unity of the race is as marked as that of personality. The individual does not stand alone, but is bound to his neighbours by the bonds of a common kinship. Privileges, or, if you like, liberty resting upon common endowments and aspirations, is circumscribed and limited by responsibilities personal and communal. The individual has an indefeasible claim to liberty, but because he is a moral being he is also responsible for his action ; and this responsibility defines in one department of life the limits to which he can go. But the well-being of others also enters as a factor into conduct. Their liberty must be respected. A deep-rooted sense of obligation to others alone can define, in another and wider department of life, the province of the individual's liberty. Each man is his brother's keeper.

Liberty and responsibility, as applicable to the individual and communities of persons, thus lay a basis for individual initiative and for collective action, which

while it issues in securing the good of the many also guarantees the good of the individual. Liberty of action, governed by the high moral *end* which necessarily inculcates care for the interests of others, establishes a rational doctrine of liberty, which is also a powerful agency of social progress. Along no other course, indeed, can an abiding and salutary social state be reached. Nothing else gives a better or stronger pledge of social betterment; and therefore liberty in the sense in which it has just been described is highly valuable, and ought to be greatly prized.

IV.

But the positive and active character of liberty must also receive very careful attention; and if what has just been stated be kept in view it will be easily perceived how these qualities belong to liberty. Liberty is positive and active, because it is the assertion of the individual to think as he wills and to pursue the objects of his choice, limited only by his personal responsibility and the interests of his fellows. He stands in a personal relation to them. They have all a claim to equal liberty under the same conditions of responsibility; whatever tends to promote their well-being must be done. Liberty as an active force makes for their *good*. It has thus a definite end; and we may add, that enlightened conceptions of its power show the end to be moral, for the moral element always springs from the *will*. The will must be first enlisted in the interests of one's fellows;

and when their *good* is sought through the agency of liberty, its power is morally positive and active.

Man, being endowed as he is with mental and moral powers, has a claim to liberty ; for these he must exercise, and he must also be free to use them. But man, standing in definite personal relationship to his fellows, has likewise a claim to liberty. The limits of liberty in both of these departments of life are well defined. These limits are clearly marked by the interests of the individual and by those of other people. Within this wide radius liberty must be regarded as much more than mere absence of restraints. It cannot, indeed, be an agent of social betterment unless it be taken as both positive and active.

But when it is put into operation in actual affairs the question at once arises, How can these limits be observed? To answer this question in an adequate manner concrete cases must be taken ; and this leads one, therefore, into those provinces of human life within which the legitimate claims of liberty are stated and urged. To the question thus raised I shall attempt an answer in the next two chapters. The question itself is intensely interesting, because it deals with practical issues to which attention is ever being directed by the publicist, the politician, and the moralist.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PROVINCES OF LIBERTY : FIRST CATEGORY, THE POLITICAL PROVINCE.

I.

THE provinces within which liberty asserts its claims are the political, the intellectual, the religious, and the economic.

The Political Province.—Governments have their functions. They exist in order to promote both the welfare and well-being of the people. They exist, therefore, for the people, and not the people for them. They are agencies through which the interests of all classes may be secured and guaranteed, so far as an external power can accomplish these ends. Their actions should, therefore, be an expression of the people's will.

Some maintain that Governments should follow and not lead, but manifestly it is the duty of the Executive and of the Legislature in a constitutional country to set worthy objects of pursuit before the people, to supply them with information respecting these objects, and to persuade them to co-operate towards their attainment. But even when all these things are done in the last resort, the will, not of the governors, but of the governed, must prevail; for, otherwise, liberty is denied, and its claims, though made, cannot be acceded to.

The question of the claims of liberty within the political province cannot, however, be answered until other questions receive, at least, a brief reply, such as, What is the origin of Governments? What is the authority on which they rest? and, What are the limits of the power with which they are invested?

1. The history of the inception and growth of Governments reveals a long and chequered course of political development. Governments originally owe their existence to military organisations which the strong in primitive societies formed. Rule passed gradually into the hands of one man, the chief. He employed the organised power for defence and aggression. He professed to guarantee the safety and peace of all under his rule. In order to secure these ends he needed a revenue, either in the form of goods or money. To gain a revenue he selected the leading men in his community, and made them responsible for collecting it.

But as his community enlarged he found himself obliged to institute Councils or Parliaments. At first the members of these councils were "unwilling hostages," but in course of time the conception of *agency* was developed, and from this again came the idea of *representation*. Positions in the King's Council or Parliament became then objects of ambition; and as Parliament was often consulted by the King, its members gradually assumed more and more power, until the time came when the granting of subsidies to the King was made the crux of disputed questions. Thus, in rough outline, Governments were formed. They gradually took over

the power of administering justice. Village law and copyhold customs gave place to larger conceptions of the right manner to preserve property and peace.

2. The *authority* of Governments cannot be easily defined. In highly civilised States it rests upon the will of the people; but when one tries to ascertain how highly civilised States were formed, the slow development of political ideas must be carefully watched. The authority was at first and for a long time physical: it depended upon the power of the sword. But physical power could not be the basis of an enduring State, and that because it does not contain within itself the moral qualities which alone can rule and reign; and therefore one, observing political developments, sees how common interests which often contained many moral issues gradually gave moral qualities to governmental authority. The governed could not always be forced to obey. The Government could not rest on *might* alone. Service had to be inspired by devotion, either to the person of the ruler or to the common interests of the community. The Government represented the people: it professed to secure their welfare; and gradually therefore it came to be regarded as the people, organised and represented for all governmental purposes. In this lies its authority.

3. As to the *limits* of the power with which Governments are invested, it has been customary from the days of Hobbes to say, that there is absolutely no limit to their power. This is repeated by almost all writers on politics. But this is just one of those sayings which, having gained currency, needs to be carefully examined. In a free country the Government is very far indeed

from having absolute power. When any great measure is proposed it must have the people's authority before the measure can be passed by the Legislature and be enforced. If the Government has not this authority it incurs the risks of resistance, and perhaps of revolution.

II.

Within the political province the limits of liberty may be seen if these risks be kept in view, for they largely define them. Government has great obligations to discharge. The well-being of all classes in the nation is its chief concern ; and its limits are as wide as their interests, nothing more and nothing less. Government, therefore, cannot be said to be discharging all its duties when it attends, say, merely to the Navy, the Army and the Police. Some have tried to limit its obligations to these things ; but since the people's well-being is at stake in other directions, many contend that all industries which are likely to develop into monopolies should be taken over by the State, or delegated by the State to municipalities. Mines, water-supplies, railways, etc., fall into this category.

Objection is, of course, taken to such State interference with trade ; but it is a notable fact that while economists of the old school, and "the man of business," go on making their protest, the State is driven by forces, which it cannot resist, towards undertaking ever larger and larger responsibilities ; and where it cannot directly discharge these, it delegates its powers to municipal authorities. The post office, telegraphs, and

to a large extent education,¹ are already taken over by the State, and that, too, with the approval of the great majority of the people. County and municipal authorities deal with roads, bridges, tramways, vaccination, Poor Laws, housing of the poor, medical attendance, education, etc.

It is also open to any municipality to petition Parliament for power to take over and deal with any industry. Sometimes this power is granted, sometimes it is refused. All depends upon the strength of the opposition. The proposal, for instance, that large municipalities should be allowed to issue their own bank notes on their own credit is one of the most needed reforms of the day; but when this question is mooted in a municipal chamber, or in Parliament, the banking interests, which Sir Robert Peel created in 1845-6 for political reasons alone, are too strong for the small number of economists and reformers who demand this authority on behalf of municipalities.²

Whenever an application on behalf of a municipality is made, or whenever Government itself proposes to undertake some new enterprise, the old question as to the limits of the State is raised, and for a time a fierce controversy is carried on. In the end the Government is obliged to undertake what is called "further socialistic enterprises." But monopolies, even when assailed by all the power which the will of the people and the authority of Parliament express, are only slowly taken out of the

¹ 53 per cent. of the cost of education is borne by local authorities, the rest by Government, which provides the money from imperial sources. There are many educationists who hold that Government ought to pay a larger percentage.

² See my *Money and Social Problems*, where the subject is dealt with at length.

hands of the individual. Still the process is going on ; and the more that political light is thrown upon the social ideal, greater progress marks the State's efforts to secure the well-being of all the people.

It is not a valid objection against this State interference, or rather, I should say, against the discharge of this State duty, when it is urged that the State has often undertaken duties and has failed. The individual also has often failed ; but that is not an adequate reason for not trying again. All that is proven by such an argument is, not that the State should refrain from such duties, but that the State has often adopted wrong methods in trying to discharge its obligations, and that it should take pains to ascertain what are the best methods to employ. Lack of experience accounts for State failures, as also for those of many individuals.

III.

The question of the limits of the State really resolves itself into one between individualism and collectivism. The contest between the advocates of these respective economic theories is perhaps keener to-day than at any previous time. It is keener, because individualists see their stronghold being assailed and are making desperate efforts to defend it : and because for the first time in history collectivism has the great advantages on its side of being advocated by enlightened and well-informed economists, and of possessing a large number of adherents who can exercise power by means of their political and municipal votes.

Some individualists, who indulge in philosophic reflections, see in the collectivist legislation of the day tendencies in operation, which are, in the present undeveloped condition of society, necessary evils to be patiently borne; but they look hopefully forward to the time when "no governments" shall be the rule, and the people shall "be ripe for absolute individualism." That is their social ideal. It needs no comment, unless, perhaps, it may be said that few people can be induced to believe in it, or regard it as an inspiring ideal.

On the other hand, there are collectivists who see in the assent which is being given to their claims only the beginning of a happy condition of society, when all means of production, exchange, and distribution shall be held by the State, and used only in the interests of the whole people. With them there is absolutely no limits to the State's power.

Two comments need only be made here upon these conflicting economic theories.

First, there have been times, as already stated, when individualism reigned supreme in Church, in State, and in Commerce; but it ever reigned with the greatest advantage to the few, and least gain to the many.

Collectivism, too, of an unorganised type has been tried. The early Christian community practised it in obedience to the behests of the new spirit which Christianity inculcated; but the industrial conditions under which it might have developed did not then exist. The Guilds of mediæval times were collectivist institutions. They were not, however, strong enough to resist rapacious kings and greedy barons. The British Govern-

ment attempted the practice of crude and one-sided principles in relation to agriculture and mining operations ; but when the State prohibited labourers from leaving one part of the country in order to find better conditions of work elsewhere ; or, when it tied men, women, and children to mines and forced them to work for little remuneration, it gave the clearest proof, on the one hand, that the best economic agencies may be misconceived and misused ; and, on the other, that even industrial changes cannot be effected by economics alone.

Economic theory must consent to be guided by moral principles. Whenever it consents, its character and tendencies at once become apparent ; and little difficulty is then experienced in pronouncing a judgment upon its merits.

Secondly, it is the simple statement of a notable historical fact to say that not only have individualism and collectivism been tried, but that the former has been practised on a far larger scale and for a much longer time than the latter. Utilitarian philosophy sanctioned and defended it. Commerce obeyed its dictates ; and even in the religious sphere it asserted its influence by laying undue stress upon individual religious interests, and too little upon the conception of the Kingdom of God.

Violent confiscations and personal greed assailed successfully such weakly-defended socialistic institutions as the Guilds and common pasturages. But now a great change has taken place, partly owing to an enlightened philosophic interpretation of the social ideal. Collectivism is rapidly obtaining a wide field for its

operations. It may as yet be imperfectly defined. Great difficulty may also be experienced in seeing how it will work out on a large scale. But one must be blind to all that is most characteristic of the economics and politics of the day, if one does not see and acknowledge that the economic theory which is designated "socialistic" is enormously extending the limits of Government duties.

IV.

But the value of these economic theories apart, the history of liberty, as an active principle in the political realm, affords abundant proof that whenever people recognise what is due to them, or is for the welfare of the great majority of them, they soon make efforts to realise their rights. The realisation of political rights has in the past entailed long and painful struggles. With lapse of time ideas of political rights have, however, become clearer and clearer. So also have conceptions of duties, personal and governmental. This simultaneous development has done much to provide the conditions which make for a larger political field within which liberty can assert itself.

Liberty, therefore, can no longer be taken to mean only and merely "absence from restraints." Some may re-echo the complaint of the severe individualist, and hold that Government interferes too much with the individual. They may also urge that its interference is an evil to be got rid of as quickly as possible. This is, however, a strange claim to make, especially if the facts and teachings of history be recalled. For individualism has

been tried for a long period and on a wide scale. It has issued in some benefits to society, but it has also brought in its train ruthless competition and many of the perplexing social evils of the day. This condition of things cannot be perpetuated. History records many protests made against it: and the moral sense of the *élite* of men revolts from it.

Those who correct their philosophic and economic theories by an accurate reading of history will be prepared for a large extension of the political fields within which the claims of liberty may be urged and granted. They will see in the slow evolution of Government, through its three great stages—*autocratic*, *aristocratic*, and *democratic*—not only a simultaneous development in the conceptions of rights and duties, but also an ever-increasing adaptation of means and agencies to the social end which is in view.

If the social ideal be distinctly seen, agencies will soon be found to further its attainment. This is a legitimate induction from the testimony of history and experience. For, again and again history shows that agencies accommodate themselves to the new and larger duties which a readjustment of the political vision reveals as social imperatives. The one follows upon the other. Given a deep sense of duty, and a clear view of the path that must be followed, then very soon means will be found with which to discharge the obligation.

If one asks for proof of these statements it lies to hand in the well-marked stages of social evolution. The development from autocracy to aristocracy, and from *that* again to democracy, supplies the clearest evidence of

new agencies being discovered as new and larger duties emerge and come into view. The difference of the liberty claimed and enjoyed under the last of these stages, when compared with the liberty claimed and enjoyed under the first stage, is very great. Enormous progress has been made in the extension of the political province within which liberty asserts its claims from the time when kings were supreme till modern times, when, say, in a highly politically-developed country, like Switzerland, direct democracy has taken the place of representative democracy.

Thus, at every stage in the social evolution agencies adjust themselves to the new situation. They also carry with them greater and greater benefits to the majority of the people. They, indeed, benefit all classes ; and it may be added, that the advance which social institutions have made under governments, directly responsible to the people, is indisputable evidence of the extent to which liberty in the political province makes for social betterment and the social ideal.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PROVINCES OF LIBERTY: SECOND CATEGORY.

INTELLECTUAL, RELIGIOUS, AND ECONOMIC PROVINCES.

I.

The Intellectual Province.—Political liberty is largely due to intellectual and religious liberty. The right to form opinions and to act upon them rests upon what is given in the very constitution of man's nature, upon his capacity to will, and his responsibility for all that he wills. But, again, if history's pages be consulted it will be seen that this indefeasible right was for a long time denied, and that it has only indeed been conceded within comparatively recent times. Liberty of thought preceded liberty of action. So long as discussions did not go beyond abstract questions, such as those which the Schoolmen delighted to handle, a certain amount of liberty was accorded to speculative writers. But since speculations have a tendency to excite controversy, and to disturb settled opinions, careful watch was always kept upon them by those in power, civil and ecclesiastic.

Theorists thus enjoyed liberty within well-defined limits. They could not, however, always, or even for an indefinite time, remain satisfied with mere discussion. They knew, too, that they were often regarded with a

certain amount of distrust and suspicion. Accordingly it soon transpired that questions as to the liberty of the thinker were raised. If he claimed the right to propound political or religious theories which ran counter to the fixed opinions of civil or ecclesiastical rulers he received short shrift.

This right was, nevertheless, strenuously affirmed. Many, resolving to be true to themselves, willingly and joyously suffered in contending for it. A long time, however, elapsed and a severe struggle ensued before liberty to form opinions was conceded. The history of martyrdoms, civil and ecclesiastical, tells the story of the sufferings and hardships endured in order to vindicate this rightful claim. The story is painful in the extreme. It shows how far astray the persecutor is led when he resists liberty of thought.

But in the course of the long struggle there emerged the definite question, How far is one entitled to go in forming opinions and in giving effect to them? This question when first raised in modern times excited great controversy. It is still discussed with keen interest. Various attitudes have been adopted in relation to it. The State and the Church at first arbitrarily denied the right of anyone to raise this question in any form. But this despotic ruling could not stand. Leaders of thought insisted upon an answer being given, at once intelligible and defensible.

An answer, however, did not come speedily. Controversy had first to do its distasteful but necessary work; for it is by means of statements and counter-statements that the air is cleared and one's vision is also clarified.

I have already pointed out that the limits of liberty cannot be adequately described by saying negatively, that so far as the interests of others are not sacrificed one has absolute freedom to think and do what one likes. Liberty must be defined in positive terms. This fortunately can be done. A scrupulous regard for the welfare and well-being of all who cross one's path is that which alone establishes a reasonable and defensible doctrine of liberty. Right conduct is not dictated by rules and regulations. Appeals must be made to motives, and not to these only, but also to the *ideal* of the individual and of social life.

The conception of self-preservation may give one a rule by which to regulate certain actions; but this, besides being necessarily a legal rule, and therefore not appealing to *spirit*, is also quite inadequate, since there are many actions which are not self-regarding. A far wider category is needed. Strictly speaking, the limits of liberty of thought and action cannot be defined. Time and circumstances must be taken into account. Sometimes more, sometimes less liberty is rightly granted. The opinion of a jury of twelve men in our country is final so far as legal claims are concerned. In some Continental States the Government assumes the right of saying what may or may not be allowed.

In Germany, for instance, there is unlimited freedom to discuss all theological questions; and perhaps because German writers are circumscribed in other departments, they allow themselves in this to run riot. They dare not, however, write as they please on political questions.

The punishment for the assumed crime of *lèse-majesté* is still severe and greatly dreaded. But within the last few years political freedom has been greatly extended. In Russia freedom of thought scarcely exists in any department. But experience is slowly teaching the most autocratic monarchs that liberty is not the danger which they imagine it to be; and gradually it is being perceived that liberty makes for a strong State.

In attempting, therefore, to ascertain the limits of liberty of thought and action, all for which one can contend is, that thought and action should always be dictated by regard for the welfare and well-being of one's neighbours. Within the limits which this regard constructs, liberty to think and carry on investigations in all departments of human life should be allowed, and that, too, without fear of punishment by either Church, or State, or public opinion.

This theory possesses an absorbing attraction for many people. Much can be said in praise of it. Very directly and powerfully it appeals to motive and ideal. It is elucidated and defended by a philosophy of life which owes little to ever-changing feeling, and almost everything to a lofty conception of the ideal towards which man strives. Its influence is such as to banish selfishness and encourage brotherly conduct, while it makes effectively for the regeneration of society. The most passionate lover of freedom needs not to travel outside the wide circumference which care for one's neighbour defines.

II.

The Religious Province.—The question of liberty in relation to religion must be adverted to, though briefly ; for, within the religious domain also liberty makes its claims. The principle already stated applies within the religious sphere, as in other departments of thought and action. Investigations within the wide realm of religion must be carried on in the light of common human interests. The honest searcher after truth must have the well-being of his fellows at heart ; and regard for their interests as well as for his own will, here as elsewhere, act as a powerful incentive and wise guide.

It ought, however, to be said that if any person, after due consideration, deliberately subscribes to the creed of a Church, he thereby limits himself ; and that he cannot go outside the Church's creed without also going outside the Church itself which has made the creed its standard. A question may, of course, arise as to the limits which the creed prescribes ; and one may legitimately contend that one's freedom to carry on investigations is not limited. But this is only a question respecting the interpretation of the creed, and nothing else.

There never was a time, perhaps, when liberty of thought in relation to religion was more generally conceded than at the present time. This has led to an unexpected result ; for, the question of creeds has itself been raised. There are many who maintain that they should be reduced to the narrowest limits. Subscription, it is urged, should only be asked to great fundamental truths. If this were done, it is claimed, there would be ample

room for freedom of thought and investigation ; and such freedom would make for progress.

But even when all these things are said and carefully noted, it still holds good that in relation to religion, as in reference to all other subjects of thought and action, the only safe rule which one can adopt and follow is *that* presented by the common interests of men and the ideal of life. This, perhaps, is not so much a rule as an index or directory ; but, however regarded, it is a sufficient guide.

III.

The Economic Province.—In the economic province liberty asserts its claims. These claims should be carefully weighed. When this is done it will at once become manifest that liberty must, within the economic domain, take account not only of the individual's interests, but also those of the whole community.

The utmost freedom, even licence, has been granted in the economic province to the individual. Urged on by a passion for riches, the advocates of individualism have pushed this doctrine of liberty to an extreme. They have claimed the right to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market. They know no standard by which to regulate payment for service rendered save "the market price of labour." They hold themselves altogether justified in pressing down the rate of wages to the lowest minimum. Sweating is not inconsistent with their conceptions of moral obligations. Without self-reproach they take advantage of the straits to which

workers are reduced, and pay them wages which are governed solely by the supply of labourers. They resent all Government interference with trade. And all this is done in the sacred name of liberty.

Could anything else show more clearly the need for a high moral *end* than this condition of things? "The well-being of others" is a factor which should be introduced into economics. If, in relation to the statement of one's opinion, this factor is essential as determining the limits of one's liberty, it is equally essential and equally urgent in relation to economics.

Under the present industrial system workmen are far from enjoying economic freedom. They can, it is true, move from place to place in search of better work and higher remuneration for the service which they render ; but unfortunately they can seldom sell their labour in a free market, and they are often obliged to dispose of it at a price which scarcely keeps body and soul together. Frankly and openly it is contended by the supporters of the present industrial system that every man should fight for himself and his own interests. The idea of "care for the welfare of others" is scouted. "The market price of labour" governs all negotiations. Seldom is an attempt made to ascertain the value of the service rendered, and very seldom is remuneration given for work done and in view of the profits which are reaped. "The well-being of others" is not a principle which is taken into account.

Instead of insisting upon this principle, the only remedy which many see for the economic evils of the day is fiscal restrictions. Under the impression that

national prosperity depends upon a high protective tariff, statesmen have set themselves to build high tariff walls, with the result that Europe to-day is one vast field wherein economic warfare is constantly being waged.

A sound doctrine of liberty would do much to make this warfare cease. Many years have elapsed since Adam Smith showed that all tariffs, being artificial, hamper commercial developments. But imagined personal and national interests prove themselves too strong when pitted against even the soundest economic reasoning, and the most wholesome doctrine of liberty.

The battle now being waged is really between these two forces. The only hope for a cessation of the strife lies in extending economic education. A large conception of human interests as against a narrow view makes an invaluable contribution towards providing an effective remedy for most economic and social evils. This large conception is demanded by commerce itself, Adam Smith being witness. It is that upon which a true philosophy of life insists. The Christian religion teaches nothing if it does not make this conception most prominent.

IV.

The claims thus made in the name of liberty are very extensive. They may, however, be placed in two categories. First, *civil* liberty, which entails self-government in one of its many possible forms, Monarchical or Republican; and, secondly, liberty of *thought* and *action*, governed by a scrupulous regard

for the well-being of others in all departments of human activity.

Some make another category, *that* of national liberty, which implies independence of alien rule. Liberty in this sense must, of course, be recognised. It means national security, safety, and freedom to give effect to the nation's will without fear of interference by foreign nations. But liberty in this sense does not raise complicated economic or delicate ethical questions. The only possible subject of dispute is that of the bearing of liberty on nationalism. Respecting this subject, it may be said that it is finding its own solution; for it is every day becoming more and more clearly perceived that as the idea of the village life was included and elevated in the larger idea of the national life, so, in time, nations will cease to be separate conflicting and opposing units, and man, as man, will be thought of and his interests cared for without respect to colour or place.

In the brief review of a subject which has been discussed by all publicists, sufficient evidence has been adduced to prove how intimately the question of liberty is related to that of social progress. It touches social life at many points, and gives form and colour to many social agencies. It has, therefore, a definite place and a definite power. But it is not in itself all that is necessary in order to realise a perfect social life. Besides, it needs to be carefully defined in the light of its own historical operations.

V.

Some assign to liberty a function which it cannot discharge. Given liberty, they say, and the social ideal will soon be reached. This is a mistake; for liberty is only one of several agencies which in their operations modify each other. It is not even the highest or most effective agency. Bentham and his followers give to it, however, extraordinary power and place. They make it stand "predominant over equality," because full equality, in their judgment, necessitates the loss of security for the fruits of personal labour.

This is a large assumption which cannot be proved, for the reason that "full equality" has never been tested and tried. But even if this contention were entertained for a moment, the common interests of a community, and the common weal, which equality does so much to guarantee, enter as elements which demand consideration. Unrestricted liberty often puts a heavy tax upon some other people's labours. This is clearly incompatible with the conception of the common weal. Interests higher and more important than those of the individual must, therefore, always place a restriction upon liberty. If this is not done, then liberty runs into anarchy, or, to quote Huxley's comment upon Spencer's objections to unnecessary laws, it runs into "administrative nihilism."

Whoever with an informed mind and wide outlook reads the long chapter of human endeavours, which have been made to establish firmly the legitimate claims of liberty; or, whoever recalls the sufferings heroically

borne in order to vindicate its rightful place among the agencies of social betterment, will not readily either minimise or unduly exalt liberty. It serves well-defined and important ends. It is essential to the realisation of the social ideal; and all, therefore, who look forward hopefully to a regenerated society must meantime give the most careful attention to the functions of liberty, and must make it their special business to secure for this highly effective agency its legitimate place, whenever social measures are propounded, or economic and moral principles are discussed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOCIAL AGENCIES : EQUALITY.

I.

IN order to exhibit the relative position which equality occupies among the agencies of social betterment I have already given a brief description of its character and functions. To all that is distinctive of equality a fuller treatment must now be given.

Equality is a powerful agency of the social ideal, and should be clearly understood. The questions which it raises are beset with difficulties ; for it deals not only with economic problems, but also with the profoundest moral principles to which attention can be directed.

The way will be cleared, and a better understanding of equality itself obtained, if it be said that a right theory of *equality* allows room for diversities of endowments and the rewards due to the different degrees of fidelity with which duties are discharged. For, *first*, all men are not equally endowed so far as mental, moral, and physical powers are concerned. All have not therefore equal capacity to use well and advantageously the means and agencies which lie within their reach. *Secondly*, all are not equally faithful. Any theory of equality which may be formulated must then take account of these

diversities, otherwise unsatisfactory conclusions will be reached.

Nor are these the only things of which note should be taken; for people occupy positions of advantage which are largely due to what they have inherited. Questions may, of course, arise respecting the manner in which possessions of land or money have been acquired. But those questions demand separate treatment. When they are impartially investigated it will be found that many positions of advantage are due to privileges arbitrarily conferred by kings and rulers, and even by Parliament. Witness the gifts of land given to royal favourites. "The landed property of Modern Europe," says Dean Plumptre, "had, for the most part, its origin in robbery and wrong."¹

Political corruption has done much to complicate social issues; but, these privileges apart, it is without question true that in many instances possessions have been secured through personal energy and fidelity to duty, through foresight and diligence. Those who inherit the fruits of such labour cannot be robbed of their riches without injustice being done to them; and it is no part of the duty of the enlightened advocate of equality to do anything which would have even the appearance of injustice. Room must therefore be made for the holding of property, legitimately acquired, in a right theory of equality.

II.

But even when account is taken of all these things, there are still wide fields of social life within which

¹ *The Contemporary Review*, Nov. 1899.

equality can make its claims. It is at once a positive and powerful principle, to which free scope for its exercise should be given within these fields. Many acute thinkers have turned their attention to its operations and have clearly perceived that the principle itself is absolutely essential to social progress. Hence its claims have appealed strongly to social reformers.

All, indeed, who have seriously set themselves to understand human society, and the conditions under which it can be perfected, have assigned to equality a prominent place, and have watched with ever-increasing interest its operations, as one of many agencies which are making for social betterment. Some highly approve of all that has been claimed on behalf of equality; others, while giving to it a prominent place, have been sometimes hopeful and sometimes pessimistic respecting its final achievements.

But before proceeding further I must here advert for a moment to the misrepresentations which have been made of equality. These have often been of the most grotesque description, and as far separated from both theory and experience as could be imagined. Nothing, indeed, is easier than to give a travesty of the views and contentions of those who advocate the claims of equality. These claims are, accordingly, sometimes represented as a demand for the equal distribution of wealth; sometimes they are described as a levelling down of all social distinctions in the most arbitrary manner. It is exceedingly difficult to be patient with those who thus misrepresent the claims made on behalf of equality. They have only the meagrest grounds for making their

altogether unjustifiable misrepresentations; for, in the effort to state the claims of equality, some of its advocates have not been sufficiently careful to describe these claims accurately, and they have therefore given a semblance of reasons for the caricature. The claims of equality have also sometimes been pushed too far, and to the exclusion of those of liberty. Hence the popular, but altogether false, notions of equality which its opponents have not been slow to use in *their* presentations of its nature and aims.

I make these statements because I do not wish to be unfair to those who have made misrepresentations of equality, and have contended that it means an equal division of wealth, and a levelling down of all social distinctions. But while one may explain the grounds on which they reach their conclusions, it is far from easy to justify them. Only the ignorant, or the prejudiced, or the hasty in judgment could make such misrepresentations.

Equality would doubtless make for a fairer distribution of wealth, not because it would arbitrarily deprive people of possessions justly earned or inherited, but because it would provide for all classes opportunities which they might use. It would also obliterate many social distinctions, because they are false, and hinder social service; but equality, rightly understood, does not so much look to the division of wealth, or the obliteration of social distinctions, as to the providing of opportunities for all classes, in order that they might make the best use of their endowments and energies for the common good of society.

III.

Since, then, misrepresentations have been made, it is essential that equality should be exhibited in its proper perspective. To do this adequately a theory of justice must be formulated and valid arguments offered for its acceptance. Conceptions of equality, indeed, turn largely upon the theory of justice which is accepted.

Now, justice is one of those subjects about which moralists have thought and written much. It has engaged the attention of all thinkers who have made a study of social phenomena and have tried to weigh rightly the issues of man's actions. Hebrew prophets, who flourished long before Greece's sages, spoke in rugged, stern language to evil-doers, and that because they had clear conceptions of righteousness. With them justice meant honesty, reliability, virtue, piety, and sincerity.¹ They made, however, no attempt to analyse the terms which they used, and their writings are free from discussion as to the origin and meaning of their words. With the Greeks it is different. Plato has much to say about justice in his *Republic*.² He defines it as "the health of the State." Aristotle makes it "merit fixed by the State."³ Cicero describes justice as including *pietas, bonitas, liberalitas, benignitas, comitas, quæque sunt generis ejusdem*.⁴

¹ צדקה from צדק is used in the sense of piety, virtue, righteousness
צדיק is the designation for a just person.

■ Books I.-II. secs. 327-369

³ *Nicom. Ethics*, Bk. VI. 13.

⁴ *De Fin.*, v. 23.

Much nearer to our own times, Hobbes and Hume identify justice with respect for property, and the performance of covenants. I have already quoted Kant's well-known description of right conduct. Spencer speaks of justice as "the mutual limitation of man's actions necessitated by their co-existence as units of society." This, he holds, issues in a state of equilibrium, which, again, is the goal of social progress. Without any of Spencer's elaborate biological interpretations Professor Adam Ferguson, in his *Essay on The History of Civil Society*, described justice in very much the same manner.

But not to quote further authorities, it is instructive to observe into what all definitions and descriptions of justice resolve themselves. It is either, as some maintain, another name for adequate conditions of social well-being, the adaptation of organism to environment in the individual and society, conformity to law, equal rights before the law, which must be impartially administered; or, as others hold, it is essentially a moral quality given in the constitution of man's nature, and called into exercise in all departments of human life by an ideal *end*, after which man, when true to himself, instinctively strives. The former theory makes justice a creation of society, something which has been evolved out of a long experience. The latter theory regards justice as *that* which makes society possible, since it obliges men to act fairly towards and seek the interests of each other. Justice, in this view, is the expression both of all that is deepest in man's nature, and of the principles which govern the moral universe. Philosophers

apart, this conception of justice is *that* which men, without respect to religious, social, or political creed, generally accept.

An effort should also be made to examine, even if briefly, the respective merits of these competing theories respecting justice, and also to ascertain the grounds upon which they rest. A proper perspective of equality can indeed only be obtained when this is done. If, then, justice is nothing other or higher than the resultant of customs moulded by reflection; or of efforts made to adjust the conditions of life, if these are confirmed by experience; or if it is only society itself giving sanction to certain forms of procedure when questions of conduct are at issue, a satisfactory explanation must be offered as to how customs, if they originally had no moral content, came to possess it. But it must also be shown how society could create moral distinctions, and account for the principles of right and wrong which are universally recognised as valid. Besides, if justice be nothing more than any of these things, no strong claims could be made on behalf of equality. At the utmost all its claims would then be tested and tried by ever-varying standards.

On the other hand, if justice implies a standard of right, the evidence of which is found in the moral order of the universe, as a rational system, the explanation of which is mind or spirit, and therefore in the constitution of man's nature, and in the ideal *end* of human life, then, the claims made on behalf of equality must be as constant, certain, and stable as are man's moral instincts, and the *end* after which man ever strives.

But this, though the main, is only one of the many considerations which give validity to a right theory of justice. Justice in this view possesses such inherent power that its claims cannot be satisfied until all hindrances to the attainment of the social ideal are removed. That ideal end is not yet reached; justice is one of the most powerful agencies to its attainment. Obey your moral instincts, give due place to the unity of self-consciousness, try to realise the end of human life, and you can neither defend nor excuse privileges arbitrarily conferred, while you will readily recognise that all the fruits due to personal energy, and fidelity to duty should be reaped by those who display these qualities.

IV.

Equality, resting on this theory of justice, lends no countenance to an equal division of wealth, nor does it aim at levelling down all social distinctions. On the contrary, it allows that the possession of wealth is legitimate. It secures facilities for self-improvement and also puts a certain kind of power into the hands of those who have riches at their command. Again, it grants that children of healthy parents have an enormous advantage on their side when compared with those who are the offspring of weakly parents; and further, that all who enjoy from their earliest days a careful home training, and the great benefits which come from having always before them a high moral example are far more advantageously placed than those who have none of these benefits, but are rather obliged to witness scenes

of misery, and are tempted to copy the bad examples which are set before them.

This theory of justice, while giving a place to these differentiæ, not only sanctions but also very strongly insists upon equality of opportunity, so that each person may make the best use of his endowments and possessions, whatever these may be.

"Equality of opportunity" is a phrase which is frequently heard. It falls glibly from the lips of many who have not taken pains to ascertain what it means. Some of these quote the phrase in order to condemn all that they assume it to mean; others of them use it always with approval. The phrase should be carefully examined.

1. "Equality of opportunity," rightly understood, means much more than equal rights before the law; much more than *judicial*¹ impartiality in administering laws honestly framed for the general good; much more even than equal political rights. It means these things, but, in addition, also equal educational advantages to all, rich and poor alike.

Those who are acquainted with the history of education know how very slowly educational advantages have been conceded. For a very long time education was confined to *gentlemen*. It was a luxury of the rich and powerful. Rabelais and Ascham, Bacon and Ratke, Comenius and Rousseau all laboured at the educational problem, and only very gradually did it dawn upon the

¹ Those who thus sum up the claims of equality beg the whole question, since the interpretation of equality depends largely upon what is meant by justice, yet they use the term *judicial* while the content of the term *justice* is still in dispute.

minds of even the greatest educationists that the well-being of the people and the health of the State demand that education should be given to all.

Within recent years great progress has been made. Educational agencies have been multiplied, and now the principle is accepted that, at least, primary education should be free and within the reach of all. It was only in 1906 that Parliament passed an Act which provides for the education of cripple children, and another Act which makes it permissible for school authorities to supply meals to poor children. This Act applies only to England. The House of Commons passed it, and applied it also to Scotland, but the House of Lords struck out the clause which made it applicable to Scotland. In order to save this Bill the House of Commons reluctantly agreed to the House of Lords' restriction. But the Education Act of 1908 now gives to Scottish School Boards the right of feeding the ill-fed, of employing medical experts to examine all children, and of taking an active supervision of the whole life of the child.

Some educationists frown upon all endeavours to open the doors of the Higher Grade schools to all pupils, on the ground that the dull would impede the progress of bright pupils. But these same educationists take no exception to the dullest of the dull entering a Secondary school if their parents can pay high fees for them. This proves the hollowness of the objections which are urged against admitting all to equality of opportunity so far as education, which so largely fits youths for life's battle, is concerned. Equality of opportunity, therefore, demands that classes from the day school to the university should be free to all.

2. Equality of opportunity means that in order to give all children as fair a start in life as is possible, those whose parents refuse to discharge their natural obligations should be placed under the supervision of the local school authority until they are able to work for themselves. This is not in any sense a question of granting favours to those children whose parents neglect their duties to their offspring. It is essentially a question which deals with the health of the members of the State. The careful tending and teaching of the young react beneficially upon the State. If the training and teaching be on sufficiently broad lines, the individual and the community alike receive benefit. These things make for healthy and educated citizens; and the strength of the State depends largely upon the physical, intellectual, and moral health of its members.

This justifies the feeding of poor and neglected children, and also the medical inspection of all pupils. Parliament, however, is bound to make provision for the punishment and, if possible, the reform of lazy and drunken parents. It must invest local authorities with ample powers in order to protect the interests of ratepayers. The lazy and drunken should not be allowed to go scot-free. They should be sent to reformatories and be obliged to work in labour colonies. The German system of dealing with tramps and loafers might indeed with great advantage be adopted. For it is as much the duty of the Government to insist that all who are able shall work as that all neglected children should be fed, and be kept under the supervision of a local authority.

3. Equality of opportunity necessitates many changes

on the modern conditions of social life. Thus, there should be better houses for the poor, more leisure for those who toil, an *adequate* scheme of old age pensions, a thorough graduation of the Income Tax, and a certain measure of security against unemployment for all who are able and willing to work. These are all questions with which the politician can deal; and, indeed, if the political programmes of the day be examined, it will be seen that already these questions lie within the province of "practical politics." Their solution is urgently needed; for the social evils, which are the darkest blot upon modern civilisation, cry loudly for redress. To tens of thousands there is no possibility of equality of opportunity being realised until these questions are satisfactorily answered, and the statute book of the realm contain Acts which give effect to these urgent demands.

4. Equality of opportunity requires that land should, as Chalmers contended again and again, bear a large part of the burden of imperial and local taxation. It belongs by right, many maintain, to the State alone, and should never have been gifted in any part of it to individuals. Private property in land, which belongs to the whole nation, in their judgment, is an anomaly and a contradiction; it is also the root of many industrial questions.

In making this claim on behalf of equality, account must, however, be taken of the opposition which is likely to be offered to the mere statement of it. Some say that to forbid private property is Utopian, impossible, and unreasonable. But those who make this claim do not argue against private property, as such, but only against private property in land. It has been already seen that

a wholesome and sane theory of equality permits, and indeed necessitates, private property in relation to many things. But land holds an economic position peculiar to itself. It cannot be multiplied like *goods*; it is not a product of private energy; it is *there*, and may be improved. Therefore land, as such, belongs to a category which is all its own.

I do not discuss here the large question as to how the land may be restored to the State. Many schemes have been propounded; and it may be taken as a very significant sign of the times that many earnest-minded persons have been forced to examine the question of *land*, and have propounded methods for its reversion to the State.

The tentative measures, embodied in many recent land Acts, supply evidence that the claims made for the State resuming possession of the land are not Utopian. Cautious people dread confiscation, and rightly too; but there would be both justice and equity if effect were given to the proposal of Dr Russel Wallace, whose solution of the land problem is, that a sum be given for the land equal to the value of the interest of the present owner and next living heir, the present market value being taken as the basis of valuation. This solution is described by Dean Plumptre, in the article already quoted, as "fairly equitable."

Some solution of the land question must be found. The solution may come gradually. Many schemes have been propounded, and earnestly advocated; but until the land question be solved, equality of opportunity in the fullest sense of the term can not be realised.

CHAPTER XIX.

CLAIMS AND SPHERE OF EQUALITY.

I.

EQUALITY includes the four demands which have been indicated in the preceding chapter. That they are great demands is admitted; but the evils which must be redressed are also great. The remedy must bear some proportion to the disease. It is, indeed, just because social life presents such vast and perplexing problems for solution that drastic measures must be adopted. I do not say that even though all that is claimed on behalf of equality were granted, social life would be ideal. Moral and spiritual factors must also contribute to the removal of the social evils of the day. *That* is self-evident; and one cannot, therefore, be mistaken when one lays emphasis upon the claims of equality.

Some people, however, hesitate to apply the moral and spiritual to such material issues as are implied in social reforms; for they hold that reform movements have been unfavourable to piety, and that reforms are purchased at the expense of devotion. It may be rightly replied that the piety which cannot stand the test of applying itself to wholesome and greatly needed reform movements is a type of piety which is fragile, attenuated, and indeed to a great extent unreal. The

world would not be poorer, but richer, if it did not exist. Genuine piety is the necessary element of the good life, and it produces an energy which is legitimately employed in righting all wrongs, spiritual, moral, and economic.

II.

But when all this is recognised, objections will still be urged against the large demands made in the name of equality. Many of these objections may be urged on severely logical grounds; but those who have been taught the great lessons of history will console themselves with the reflection that, happily, logical objections are easily pushed aside in the slow evolution of society.

Complaint, too, may be made that the people are not sufficiently educated to enjoy the benefits which equality guarantees, and that, therefore, they cannot be trusted. The remedy lies to hand. Educate them better, and they will be fit both to discharge their duties and enjoy their privileges. But those who make this complaint fail to see that it is the existence of unjustifiable inequalities which, in many instances, prevents communities and individuals from being able to use and enjoy the benefits which equality confers.

It will perhaps tend to clarify our vision if the point thus raised be examined for a moment. Now, as already stated, it is beyond all question true that inequalities exist which are the outcome of privileges unjustifiably conferred. The interests of society and the well-being of the individual demand that these inequalities should be

swept away. Let these things be assumed, then the question arises as to the fitness of communities and individuals to enjoy the benefits of equality.

In the process of sweeping away the abuses great danger, it is admitted, may lie in the path of reformers. History gives many examples of the danger encountered. Perhaps the most notable instance which history supplies is that of the French Revolution of 1789. The French people, spurred on to action by the extravagant pretensions of their rich and cruel rulers, declared for equality. Their conduct, it is said, points a moral. They could sweep away the old, but could not at once establish new and wholesome conditions. *That* is allowed; but a hasty inference is drawn from all that then took place when it is contended that the doctrine of equality, thus tested and tried, proved itself a failure.

For what were the conditions under which the claims of equality were tested? The poor and the working classes of the French nation suffered terribly at the hands of their rulers. They were literally goaded into excesses. The Revolution itself presented phases which cannot be justified; but in so far as it swept away even with a strong hand long-standing abuses and artificial distinctions, it thereby gave a vivid illustration of the mighty power of the liberal spirit which inspired it. The thunderstorm may spread devastation along its whole course, but it clears the air. The French Revolution entailed untold sufferings, but it also conferred upon Europe untold benefits.

The conditions, however, did not then exist under which the principle of equality could be fairly tested;

and those, therefore, who regard the Revolution as pointing a moral, and uttering a warning against any attempts to realise equality, altogether fail to read history rightly. For that which history then, and often before and since, has made plain, is the impossibility of reaping the wholesome fruits of equality either while unjustifiable inequalities exist, or during the time of stress and storm, when they are being swept away.

III.

The subject of equality would be imperfectly and inadequately treated were references not made to political equality, and to the objections which are raised against its full realisation ; for it is manifestly by means of political and other co-operating agencies that equality of opportunity can be secured.

Now, the whole trend of things at the present time is towards an extension of the franchise. Countries, like our own, which enjoy *representative* democracy, find that they cannot satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people, or even ascertain what are their judgments and opinions on any given question by means of such democracy. The demand is therefore made for *direct* democracy. All who have political duties to discharge must also have political votes.

This is a sound doctrine ; and however much other principles may be brought into competition with it, they cannot displace it. Thus, to take a notable illustration, it is held by some that the only safe rule upon which to proceed is that of taxation and representation. But

many who plead for the application of this principle not unreasonably urge that votes should bear some proportion to the amount of taxation; and whenever this claim is conceded, the balance of political power is all on the side of the rich. This again issues in class legislation; and class legislation is the bane of political as well as of social life.

There is really no safe substitute for the theory of political duties having as their corollary political votes. These two go naturally together, and are guarantees of political stability. For, when they are closely examined, it is found that the question of personality, the worth of the individual, lies at the root of an adequate theory of equality. If elevated views of personality be entertained, the individual life at once assumes an importance and a value which make the granting of political votes to all who have political duties to discharge the barest act of justice.

It is, of course, the business of political art to devise the means by which effect can be given to claims made on behalf of each individual. Political art has also to take account of the times and conditions under which these claims are made; but once let it be granted that each person has political duties which he must discharge, then a suffrage as wide as these duties is the only legitimate conclusion which can be drawn from these premises.

Some may hesitate to draw this conclusion, and may perhaps offer objections to it; but if political history has made anything plain it is this; that the strongest States are those which are the expression of the will of all

the people. Whether, therefore, one approves or disapproves, one cannot resist long and successfully the trend of political events. An extension of the suffrage is, therefore, only a question of time and circumstances in all free States.

IV.

Some writers, in their passion for the reign of equality, place social as well as political equality in their programme. But the difference between political and social equality should be carefully noted. Political equality is *that* which Governments can confer and confirm. It is secured by a legislative Act or Acts. Social equality is not the outcome of legalism in any form, though Acts of Parliament may safeguard social institutions in which social equality is enjoyed. Social equality, indeed, belongs to an entirely different category from that of political equality.

It is not, however, easy to write or speak of social equality without being misunderstood, and yet there is scarcely any other subject which more urgently demands frank treatment. Social distinctions are made. They are rigidly preserved. The classes, of which again there are assumed to be many degrees, count themselves as separate from the masses. What is called "the higher set" will have nothing to do with "the lower." They shun being introduced to them; and if they meet them at any time for a moment on a common platform, they do not afterwards recognise them. All this is foolish; and it is extremely hurtful to social well-being.

When one inquires, Upon what grounds do social distinctions rest? the only answer which can be given is, that they are made to depend upon birth, wealth, and, in some rare instances, upon education, and services rendered to the State. It may savour of social revolution to question the moral validity of these distinctions. Great store may be set upon them. Some people may eagerly covet "social status"; but what is there to justify them? To be the children of industrious, intellectual, physically healthy and morally good parents is a distinction, and carries with it many and great benefits; but "social status" is not accorded to such children. There are some poor people who can trace their ancestry back through many generations, but one seldom hears of social distinctions being recognised, or a social position being given so far as these poor people are concerned. Their poverty is sufficient to exclude them from what is called the higher social status. Riches, however, which are material, can secure a passport to "society." They may also command certain forms of power; but they are devoid of moral content, and cannot evoke admiration or affection.

An adequate discussion of equality obliges one to give expression to these obvious truths, even though they may seem to some devotees of caste to be revolutionary. They must, however, be stated, for otherwise social evolution can neither be understood nor rightly directed by those who take a part in the development of social life.

If social distinctions are to be allowed in a highly developed community, only those based on merit and

personal service ought to stand. But it must be the endeavour of all true social reformers to bring fictitious distinctions to an end. They must be discountenanced. So long as they exist they are a menace to social well-being. They set up false ideals and mislead those who come under their influence. Many of the social evils of the day are due to caste. The eager haste to obtain an entrance into "society" explains much of the hardships and poverty which exist, and baffle social benefactors. If a remedy is to be found, these benefactors must go to the root of things; and whenever they do this they will discover in the fictitious social distinctions of the day some of the strongest barriers to social well-being.

On the other hand, if social distinctions based on merit and personal service be permissible, it will be found that those who might justly lay claim to these distinctions will be the first to decline them. For it is of the very nature of the work which they do that it obliges them to think last and least of themselves. Where service is rightly rendered, thoughts of and claims to social distinction are out of place. Those who win distinctions will not parade them. They will find repayment and reward if they succeed in helping their fellows to lead nobler and better lives. Social distinctions based thus on moral qualities, and having these issues, are legitimate.

It is admitted that, in order to the recognition of such distinctions, social life must be elevated, purified, and indeed be of a very high order. But what is the meaning of all social endeavours unless it be, that men labour

in order to improve and perfect social life? All efforts directed at social betterment imply the possibility of the elevation of society. The more, therefore, that social life is improved the more rapidly will the conditions be supplied under which social distinctions, of the kind just described, and having the results just indicated, be possible.

V.

But while thus one may paint a fair future, and anticipate the reign and rule of the highest moral qualities in our common social life, one must not forget to remind oneself again and again that there are legitimate distinctions based upon the fidelity with which endowments and opportunities are used. The right use of a liberal education, for instance, goes to create *taste*. People equally well educated and trained find a common bond uniting them together, and an element in which they can discuss and pursue common aims. Those who have misused their opportunities are "out of their element" in the company of educated persons. Distinctions based on mental and moral endowments and their profitable employment cannot therefore be blotted out. They are legitimate and indeed inevitable. This holds good on almost any theory of morals. Certainly it is true, even if we accept the unverified dictum, ascribed by Stuart Mill to Bentham,¹ "Everybody to count for one, and no body for more than one"; and equally true also if we accept the idealist's theory of morals and of society, and with him regard each person

¹ See *Utilitarianism*, p. 93.

as an imperfect realisation of the universal reason, and as either actually or potentially a member of society, and therefore as an equal unit with his fellows.

The earnest inquirer cannot be indifferent to the moral theory which may be accepted; but whichever theory is adopted, it must be recognised, on the one hand, that each person has *sui generis* his own endowments and qualities; and, on the other, that the use or misuse that is made of these goes to create conditions of social life which cannot be disregarded.

It is scarcely necessary to add—for the statement is quite obvious—that many social schemes suffer greatly because they are made to rest upon the assumption of a *possible, absolute, and unvarying equality*. I have shown that this is a view which no one who understands the facts of social life can hold and defend; but at the same time great care must be taken in order to ascertain upon what merits, valid and legitimate, distinctions rest. All social reformers and lovers of equality must, therefore, be on their guard against making assumptions respecting the possibility of absolute equality; but they must not shut their eyes as to political and social inequalities for which there is no rational justification. Nor for them can it be a matter of no moment what moral theory they accept in their attempt to understand political and social life. That theory alone can be acceptable which allows them the amplest scope for advocating man's legitimate claims, and for insisting upon the discharge of all his obligations; which inspires them with worthy motives as they try to discharge the social duties which lie to their hands; and which impels

them to remove all unjustifiable inequalities in order to secure equality of opportunity for all their fellows, and pursue inspiring and lofty ideals, the realisation of which implies the transformation and regeneration of society.

CHAPTER XX.

SOCIAL AGENCIES : BROTHERHOOD.

I.

IN the examination of the content of liberty and equality it has been seen upon what bases these two powerful agencies of the social ideal rest, and also towards what objects they are directed. The ends towards which they operate have, indeed, been made quite clear. With these results in full view a favourable position is now provided for considering *brotherhood* as an agency of social betterment.

It is easy to speak in general terms about brotherhood, but if the subject is to be rescued from mere sentiment an effort must be made to ascertain, first, how it has been treated in the past, and what is the view of its functions which enlightened sociologists now take; secondly, the evidence which can be adduced in support of their view; and, thirdly, the claims made on behalf of brotherhood and the arguments which strengthen these claims.

If an investigation be conducted along those lines, *brotherhood* will not only be rescued from mere sentiment, but it will be exhibited as an active and powerful factor in politics, in commerce, and in all social affairs.

Until within quite recent times *brotherhood* was not

treated in an exhaustive and scientific manner. Nothing of the attention was, for instance, given in former times to it that was devoted to the discussion of liberty and equality. People accepted it in an indefinite way as true, but did not examine its basis and content. Even when brotherhood was coupled with liberty and equality by a certain school of reformers, the ideas which were entertained respecting its character and functions were nebulous in the extreme. Phrases like "the worship and service of humanity" and "general philanthropy" were used, but they meant little or nothing to those who employed them, and that because they had not given a careful study to all that the term *brotherhood* connotes.

Within recent years a change of attitude has taken place; and here, as in so many other departments of human life, the change is largely due to the concrete needs of the poor crying out loudly for redress. Publicists and sociologists have, therefore, recently been forced to examine the claims of brotherhood; and whenever they have attempted this task they have been obliged to look carefully at those questions which bear upon the constituent elements in brotherhood, and also upon its character and aims. Attention is now, therefore, directed by many writers to brotherhood.

Liberty, as a subject of historical inquiry, has recently received a restatement by prominent writers.¹ It is by no means sufficient to say that already Stuart Mill has treated the subject exhaustively, and has, as some

¹ *Vide* Dr M'Kinnon's *History of Liberty*; Dr Oman's treatise, *The Problem of Faith and Freedom*; and Lord Acton's work, *The History of Freedom, and other Essays*.

believe, stated all that is to be said on the subject. Mill has indeed written acutely on liberty, and has made an attempt to apply his philosophy to liberty; but he has deduced from his utilitarian premises far more than they legitimately yield. His treatise on *Utilitarianism* abounds in expressions which an idealist might have written. This needs to be kept in view, for it explains how Mill, in his famous essays in the *Fortnightly Review*, went so far towards Socialism; and it gave Sir James Stephen abundant cause for his not unsympathetic but certainly trenchant criticism of Mill's position. But Utilitarianism is always difficult to describe. Stephen himself, while objecting to Mill's definition, reads into Utilitarianism idealistic conceptions when he says that it is "the widest possible extension of the ideal of life by the person who sets up that standard."¹

The drift of philosophic thought towards idealism has rendered many impatient with Mill's philosophic position; and these, since they reject his philosophy, cannot rest satisfied with his theories of liberty. They explain human action in terms of a larger and, as they hold, of a truer view of life, because they explain it in terms of *spirit*.

Equality has also received attention. But the controversy as to what equality implies has been carried on almost exclusively by Socialists and their opponents. A reference to this controversy shows that the subject debated is greatly narrowed; for the discussion has not turned upon the question, "Is equality right?" but

¹ See *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*, p. 268.

upon the question, "Is equality practicable?" The basis upon which equality rests, and its moral and economic sanctions, are far from having received final treatment. Most of those, however, who discuss this subject are either satisfied that the last word has been spoken upon equality long ago, or using the term, without attempting to analyse its meaning, they hastily pronounce a judgment upon its practicability.

Liberty and equality require to be restated in presence of the social problems of the day: for liberty, especially economic liberty, and equality are factors which must be brought into operation if the social evils of the day are to be removed. In the preceding chapters I have attempted to deal at some length with liberty and equality. I have tried to restate them, and to show how they apply to the social questions of our time.

But now, when *brotherhood* is examined, note must be taken at the outset of the vast amount of attention which has within quite recent years been given to this subject. Its content has been carefully investigated, and its claims have been prominently brought forward. Never, perhaps, has the brotherhood of man been so strongly emphasised as at the present time. Religious teachers of all schools speak of it, while some of them make it their chief doctrine, and in its terms try to explain all truths and all duties. Moral philosophers give it a conspicuous place in their discussions. Anthropologists base many of their investigations upon it, and social reformers regard it as the principal support of the social structure. Since, then, brotherhood is so pro-

minently before men's minds, the utmost care must be taken to give a right interpretation of its meaning and claims.

I have already directed attention to the necessity of making an attempt to resolve all social agencies into a synthesis in terms of brotherhood. In this synthesis the respective positions of each social agency can be clearly indicated; but brotherhood must be taken as summing up what is essential in all the agencies.

II.

The evidences of this are apparent on all sides. If some of these be examined, even briefly, the claims made on behalf of brotherhood may become apparent. Thus liberty and equality are accepted by most writers as very powerful agencies of social improvement; but they are at the same time treated as insufficient to realise the social ideal. Liberty, it is held, can do much and can also secure many benefits: so also can equality. But something more is needed. A high ideal and a strong motive are also required. Brotherhood supplies both of these. It inspires liberty and equality with motive and ideal. It is the power which urges men to make earnest efforts to secure the highest good of their fellows.

The influence which brotherhood creates is of a peculiar kind. It is gentle, persuasive, and also effective. A common nature, common interests and aims, bind man to man. In their selfishness, and under the influence of mistaken ideas as to what makes for the

highest good, some may forget or disregard the bonds which unite one man to another; but the common possessions must first be set aside as unreal, and men must deny all that is most distinctive of their existence before these bonds can be broken.

Neither of these things is really possible. The ties which bind men together are indissoluble.

Brotherhood then rests upon identity of nature; and the influence which proceeds from it makes directly and effectively for liberty and equality; but it makes for them in a particular way. It persuades and does not drive. It aims at winning, and not at coercing, those to whom its appeals are addressed. It renders all actions spontaneous and has nothing to do with physical force. It expresses itself in these willing actions; and they must, therefore, be in character like that from which they proceed.

This gentle and persuasive influence is ever telling in favour of liberty and equality. The claims made in their name are conceded, because this influence is at work. The sphere of its operations widens as society becomes more developed. A great mistake is made when reformers, disregarding this influence, rely upon physical force. It is true that there have been occasions when men have been obliged to take arms in defence of liberty; but physical force produces little good in the long run. It has often done much harm. Witness the political and religious persecutions, which so darkly blot the pages of history. Misguided zeal employing physical power has frequently thrown social movements back for centuries. Far more and brighter hope for the race

lies in realising that men share an identical nature and have common interests; that "consciousness of kind" is a powerful motive to common service, and that "mutual aid" is the law which even all animals instinctively obey,¹ and should be that of all men.

A feeling of brotherhood has already done much by way of securing national, political, and religious liberty. This feeling is growing deeper, and is making to-day for economic freedom. No one who has an adequate sense of brotherhood can continue to extract the maximum of labour out of his fellows at the lowest possible remuneration; he cannot push ruthlessly his own interests. Sweating, slumdom, and poverty are all contradictions of the spirit of brotherhood, and are severely reprobated by it. But the same brotherly and persuasive influence is making itself felt in the wide province within which equality asserts its claims. Unjustifiable social distinctions cannot be permanently abolished by violence. They can only be equalised by the power of brotherhood. Equality, as the product or outcome of the influence which a feeling of brotherhood creates, is thus the solution of many social evils.

These are some of the evidences which may be legitimately adduced in favour of a synthesis of social agencies in terms of brotherhood. Liberty and equality are incomplete without its wholesome influence. They owe a large debt to brotherhood. It creates a new atmosphere as well as a new motive. It is at once that which inspires and guides other social agencies towards a

¹ The proof of the operations of this law is detailed in Prince Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*.

worthy ideal. The greatest possible prominence is therefore, and rightly, being given to the brotherhood of man, for, according as its content is understood, and its motive, power, and ideal are recognised, so will society make for the highest moral and economic perfection.

III.

While no one can readily or easily fail to perceive what brotherhood implies, it still needs to be acknowledged that many people treat the claims made in its name as irrational. They admit that many beautiful things can be said about brotherhood, but at the same time they say with the utmost self-complacence that these beautiful things can never be realised in business and political life. They are ideals, pictures of what perhaps should be, but nothing else. The very idea of a universal brotherhood is scouted.

Its rejection is justified on the ground that brotherhood cannot be a working principle. Notwithstanding all that seers have uttered, and poets have sung, those who thus reject the idea of a universal brotherhood often claim to be in sympathy with seers and poets, but they say, with somewhat scornful tones, brotherhood on a wide world scale is a mere dream and is wholly impracticable.

It is perhaps idle to argue with those who have reached this conclusion. It may, however, be said that a very low idea of the potentialities of human nature, and of man's ultimate destiny is entertained if hopes respecting the realisation of brotherhood be dismissed

as irrational. For what is the alternative? It is society without a future brighter or better than that which self-seeking creates, or prudential considerations suggest. But such an outlook cannot be accepted by those who believe in the progress of the human race. These acknowledge quite frankly that there are still many barriers to progress which need to be removed. They also perceive that a brotherly spirit must animate man : but it is their deepest conviction that the difficulties yet to be overcome are not greater than those which in the slow evolution of society have already been surmounted, and that man can be inspired by a spirit of brotherhood. They indeed see clearly that man stands in the closest relationship towards his fellows, is dependent upon them, and that this intimate relationship creates the conditions in which man can realise his life. Brotherhood is, therefore, not only a possibility ; it is also a necessity.

But belief in the progress of the human race is not the only ground upon which brotherhood rests. Man belongs, both in virtue of his endowments and his instincts, to a realm within which righteousness and love may rule and reign ; and these two qualities necessitate brotherhood. I am well aware that a certain measure of risk is incurred when religion is introduced into this subject ; for many take offence whenever religion is mentioned, and imagine that they are rendering a public service, or at least a useful service, to readers, when they warn religion off the field.

Religion, however, cannot be excluded without also refusing a sphere for the exercise of man's highest powers. Coventry Patmore, whose personality is a

puzzling study, but whose lofty ideals are expressed in beautiful poetic language, rendered a first-class service when he protested against the exclusion of religion from common, everyday life. In *The Unknown Eros* high ideals are not only described, but a strong protest is made in the name of beauty and virtue against the exclusive claims of science. To-day, perhaps, on account of his protests and those of others, it is seen that religion embodies much of what is highest in human life. Carlyle and Ruskin, together with present-day writers like Dr Ward and Dr William James, Mr H. G. Wells and Mr G. Bernard Shaw, all on different grounds, object to science and the logic, which it employs, being taken as a satisfactory explanation of the ordered harmony of the universe, and of man's place in the universe. If this objection be sustained, then, since religion, rightly understood, is chiefly concerned with the rule of righteousness and of love, man must realise his union with his fellows. Brotherhood is, therefore, on this ground also a necessity, otherwise righteousness and love cannot universally obtain among men and hold sway over them.

These qualities make for the common good of mankind ; and the conception of the common good again necessitates operations towards a brotherly attitude of man to man, and also towards the uplifting of the lower races in order that they may have a place in the commonwealth of nations. The very idea of commonwealth, indeed, carries with it the idea of the common good ; and when the commonwealth *of nations* is thought of, participation in the common good on the part of all

communities and people is implied. Each, however, has also its own duties to discharge; each has likewise a special fitness for special duties, and when, therefore, each makes its respective contribution to the common good the brotherhood of man is near to its perfect realisation. Expressed in the language of religion this means, that the Kingdom of God is near to its perfect consummation. Within that kingdom the rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is absolute.

CHAPTER XXI.

BROTHERHOOD AND HISTORY'S TEACHINGS.

I.

HISTORY clearly teaches that individuals and nations fall far short of doing justice to the brotherly relationship in which they stand towards each other. Perhaps they may, in their mistaken zeal as to what makes for life, be satisfied for many years yet to come with a struggle for supremacy, and for whatever, in their judgment, promises to yield gains and advantages. But in failing to do justice to the relationship in which they stand towards each other, they do injustice and great wrongs to themselves; for they thereby deny themselves the conditions upon which well-being depends, and true welfare can be attained. They have, accordingly, yet to learn that the path to the highest honour, and to the attainment of the common good, is that indicated by brotherhood.

But it may be said that, so far are nations from contemplating anything even approximating to brotherhood, they enter into fierce competition with each other in providing the most destructive weapons of war. And it may also be asked, how is race hatred to be eradicated? how are jealousies and rivalries to be rooted out? History, which in many spheres of life is our chief instructor, answers, in part, these questions.

II.

It tells us that there was a time when clan fought against clan, as in savage states to-day. It emphasises the now well-attested facts that men gradually came to recognise the benefits of communal life; that townships were formed; and that these existed, as will be seen in a moment, until powerful lords arose and crushed the township and established the manor.

But history also gives proof that as the area of common interests were widened tribal and local wars ceased. In the most primitive times, as among savages still, every extension of the area was a surprise to those who saw it taking place. It was, indeed, something quite unexpected. Few then could look beyond what was present; and when new developments took place, which carried with them common benefits, they looked back upon the past, and wondered why they did not earlier see the possibility of the new condition of things. The same feelings were excited when wage-earning, with even limited economic freedom, was introduced. And, just as among primitive people the extension of the area of common interests was accompanied with the observance of elaborate and solemn rites, which signified the making of brotherhood, so in later times popular demonstrations of gladness marked the advance from a lower to a higher stage of economic life. History thus shows how the area of common interests and economic well-being was gradually widened; and it affords abundant justification for the inference that there is really no limit to the area of common interests, save the limit of the

human race itself. Thus may national hatreds be eradicated, and commercial jealousies be rooted out.

But these questions receive another answer. At the present time national rivalries are gradually giving way. The ethically strongest nations are setting an example of good-will to their neighbours. It is indeed true that in highly civilised States fierce economic wars are still waged ; and that these give birth to feelings of jealousy. But in the political world there is a cordial understanding between nations to-day which would not have been deemed possible a few years ago. Besides, all over Europe the feeling is growing in intensity, and the conviction is deepening, that brotherhood is a reality, and that workmen should not go to war to slay each other at the bidding of ambitious rulers. Labour interests are also uniting man to man ; and higher still, social philosophy is emphasising the brotherhood of man. It is teaching that the interests of one class can only be secured by seeking the interests of all classes. It may take a long time to realise this teaching in all its fulness ; but it is being slowly disseminated, and the seed sown will sooner or later bear fruit. Thus, too, may national rivalries, jealousies, and hatreds be abolished.

III.

Recent research has thrown clear light upon the actual historical development of communities and nations. This development has been minutely traced by Maine in his *Village Communities*. Stepniak's *Russia under the Tsars*, Seebohm's *English Village Community*, Oman's *The*

Great Revolt of 1381, Gomme's *The Village Community*, and Jesse Collings' *Land Reform* deal at length with this important subject. Research shows that at one time a simple communal life has been possible in almost all countries; but that when the area of land, which a given community possessed, was largely extended, and yielded abundant harvests, powerful men stepped in, and imposed their will upon the people.

The temptation to greed was then, as now, very great. Greed gave birth to oppression. How this happened is graphically described by Langland in *Piers Plowman*, where the ruling classes are likened to foreign rats, who leap upon and destroy those native to the soil. Those who seized the reins of power soon assumed lordship over their fellows. In course of time they came to regard themselves as privileged persons, and entitled to exact service, to make laws, and to do what they liked. Hence arose *lords* who grasped the land, and led extravagant lives at the expense of the toilers.

The revolts of the peasants in France in 1358, in England in 1381, in Germany in 1525, were vigorous protests against the tyranny of these lords. The revolt of the peasants in Russia to-day belongs to the same category, and is a further illustration of the trend of historical movements towards the realisation of brotherhood. For though these revolts often threw back movements for generations, it was by means of the terrible sufferings to which they were subjected that nations were disciplined, and were fitted to enjoy the benefits of highly civilised States. It was thus also that they came to realise their unity and brotherhood. Common suffer-

ings and privations united the villagers together, and made them feel their brotherhood.

To-day there is in all European countries an intense desire on the part of the people to get back to the land, and to enjoy the advantages of communal life without any of the hardships which the grasping greed of lords produced. The mediæval village life made for true brotherhood. The villagers held common possessions, and had also common work. Professor Paul Vinogradoff, whose work, *The Growth of the Manor*, threw so much light upon the origin of serfdom, has recently succeeded, after the most praiseworthy and patient research, in proving from documentary evidence that the township is older than the manor, and that English feudalism destroyed the territorial organisation and reared itself on the ruins of the townships.¹ In the school of communal life the people were taught to exercise a brotherly spirit. It was the ruling classes who disturbed the harmony of this life, and gave abundant proofs, by deeds of remorseless cruelty, that their chivalry was in name only.

The manifest endeavour of all modern social movements is to get rid of excesses, arbitrary power, and unjust dealing; and also to allow the people to possess and use the land. This is one of the chief justifications of these movements. Some who take a prominent lead in them look forward to the day when the land, under a just system of compensation, shall be restored to the State; others are content, meanwhile, to use the Legislature and all administrative departments of the State for the good of all, without formulating any theory as to how

¹ See his *English Society in the Eleventh Century*, Oxford, 1908.

reforms may be effected. But however interpreted, social movements represent a volume of opinion which is all for a return to the land and to a simpler life. This opinion is based upon brotherhood. This is indeed one of its distinctive notes; and its advocates in all countries contend for a spirit of brotherliness in relation both to material welfare and to social well-being.

It is in the judgment of many far-sighted men a pity that some ardent social reformers should declare strongly against Christianity. The Mediæval villagers were intensely devoted to Christ and His kingdom. Their religious devotion largely explains their brotherly conduct. But now things are changed; and many reformers, supported by scientists who are all for materialism, and that, too, despite the protests of mental and moral philosophers, and partly justified by the indifference of the Churches to the false economic laws which her members all too faithfully obey, affirm that their function is to discredit Christianity, and thus prepare the way for a higher and better social life.

One must be patient with the extravagances of the inadequately informed as to the spirit, motives, and aims of the Christian Faith. One must also see what is good in their schemes, and differentiate between what is essential to social prosperity and what is but a passing phase of newly-awakened activities, misdirected and made to serve ends which are foreign to their own nature. It must also be recognised that it is extremely difficult to guide rightly great social movements. They are always attended by excrescences, which are generally emphasised by those who are responsible for them, while

opponents point to these unnatural outgrowths, and utter sweeping condemnations of what is good as well as of what is bad in the schemes of social betterment which they oppose.

But after all due allowances are made, one cannot fail to see that the whole trend of social movements from the earliest to the latest times has been towards the realisation of brotherhood. Many of the most steadfast friends of national honourable relationships have been found among the toilers who have grasped the conception of brotherhood. To-day they are organising their forces, and are making their influence felt in international affairs.

IV.

But if a larger survey of history be made, it will be seen that high ethical principles have, at different periods, been conceived and enunciated, and that these also made for brotherhood.

It is not known with sufficient accuracy what were the moral standards set up by the ancient Assyrians and Egyptians. Recent investigations are throwing an increasing light upon these standards. Witness the Code of Humarabi. It may, however, be said with certainty, that the Hebrew prophets and the Stoics were among the first who systematically taught brotherhood, and insisted upon all that it implied. Hebrew prophets flourished before the Stoics, and were great preachers of righteousness. How the East came to possess conceptions of brotherhood is a question which is full of interest. "In thee shall all families of the earth

be blessed,"¹ was a promise made to the founder of the Hebrew nation. This conception, however accounted for, is profoundly significant. It shows that at a very early period ideas of brotherhood were entertained in the East.

There is good reason for saying that Alexander the Great, 356-323 B.C., brought from the East intellectual and moral treasures of which the Greeks availed themselves. Socrates, 469-399 B.C., and his immediate followers had already greatly enriched the intellectual and moral life of Greece. Plato and Aristotle attempted a reasoned theory of the Universe. But no Greek before the time of the Stoics conceived duties as possibly lying outside the limits of the State. The Stoics were the first to give a systematic treatment to brotherhood, as world-wide. From the time of Zeno, 340-260 B.C., till that of Marcus Aurelius, 121-180 A.D., and indeed long afterwards, the Stoics taught that "the entire race ought to form a single community."

They were, however, unable to discover a practical system of existence. Their protests against a narrow national exclusiveness were largely negations. They entertained visions of a world-wide brotherhood, but they never succeeded in finding an adequate motive to disinterested actions. Aurelius, notwithstanding all the wisdom embodied in his famous twelve books entitled *Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν*, *Things respecting Himself*, and generally quoted as his *Meditations*, judged it not inconsistent with his system of truth to put the aged and saintly Polycarp to death in 166 A.D., and eleven years later to sacrifice Irenæus to the fury of the mob.

¹ Gen. xii. 3.

When we turn from Stoicism to Christianity we find brotherhood insistently affirmed and widely inculcated. The genius of the Christian Faith is altogether in favour of it. Nothing else receives greater prominence than the duty of loving all, and doing good to all who cross one's path without respect to race differences.

Christianity has, indeed, a distinct saving message for the whole world; and in that message brotherhood is emphasised. It enunciates ethical principles which are opposed to all unfair dealing, and to all caste distinctions. Its great contribution is, that it reveals the marvellous power of love as a motive to actions, and stakes everything upon obedience to the claims of love. National jealousies and hatreds are inconsistent with these claims. Christianity, therefore, completes and crowns the record of ethical principles which have been conceived and enunciated, and supplies abundant proof of the reality of brotherhood.

V.

But, keeping in view the conclusions already reached, it is now necessary to inquire whether brotherhood can become an active factor in society. The ethical teachings of Christianity are acknowledged to be the highest that have ever been enunciated and enforced. With all the wealth of these teachings in view, can, then, brotherhood be applied to politics, commerce, and social affairs? This is really the test question to which many fervently desire an answer.

It must be confessed that under the present economic

conditions great difficulty is experienced in all attempts made to apply Christian principles. Politics may feel their influence. Legislation may be and indeed is increasingly a reflection of the Christian spirit. But when one comes to commerce, where personal interests appeal more powerfully, one recognises the extreme difficulty of applying the ethics of the Christian Faith. One is, indeed, obliged to conclude, either that the ethical teachings of the Christian Faith are Utopian and impossible; or, that there is something fundamentally wrong in the present industrial system. These alternatives present themselves to every thoughtful person. There is no way that leads past them. They confront him; and one or other alternative must be accepted.

The present economic conditions, it must be admitted, lend little aid to the realisation of brotherhood. The rule followed under economic sanction is, "everyone for himself." Hence the loud demands which are made by reformers for a readjustment of economic conditions. Hence, too, the many attempts to indicate a better way for the conduct of business, and the eager search after a solution of social problems. Some see in co-partnerships, co-operative societies, and joint-stock companies, when purified from all self-seeking, indications of the manner in which business transactions may be conducted on a large scale, and in which the profits may be distributed among all who render service.

But whatever may be the course of the industrial evolution this, at least, is certain, that Christianity does not justify economic conditions under which sweating, and poverty, and crime are inevitable. It does not tell men

how to conduct business. It leaves to them the responsibility of devising methods and plans ; but it makes plain the spirit and the principles which should guide them ; and perhaps a large part of life's discipline lies in the obligation which rests upon them to readjust economics to the sovereign and gracious demands of brotherhood. It did not justify slavery or serfdom, but neither did it show *how* these were to be supplanted by better economic conditions. All that it did was to affirm that its principles of righteousness, love, and brotherhood must be applied. The long and severe struggle which ensued, as men strove to rise to a higher economic level, is perhaps the best commentary which can be offered as to the manner in which something higher than "wage-earning" shall in the future be adopted, and brotherhood in the economic sphere be realised.

Christianity bids all men be obedient to its principles. The obedient are rewarded by finding their life in seeking the good of their fellowmen. Struggle and conflict may still be their lot. Human life is indeed one long discipline. The light of Christianity, however, burns steadily. It shows the way. All who really embrace it, and are obedient to its high ethics, must labour for ever better and more perfect conditions under which they and their brothers may be enabled to live higher lives.

This is at once their reward, and also the evidence of the victorious power of brotherly actions with which nothing can successfully compete. For the moment there may be conflicts and misapprehensions. These may arise even out of the very wealth of man's achievements. For instance, the signal triumphs of physical

science are brilliant ; and some men with their narrow and contracted vision may place the physical in opposition to the moral. Many of them, indeed, declare loudly for physical science, and exclude moral beauty and goodness. But all that is deepest in man's nature is a distinct and clear prophecy that goodness, love, and moral beauty can alone satisfy the hunger and quench the thirst of the human heart. The regeneration and transformation of society can only be the products of these qualities. It is left to those who believe in their power to apply them. They will bear their own fruit.

A thorough readjustment of the economic conditions of life is the most urgent need of our day. When once this is clearly seen, though it may entail great sacrifice, all who profess the Christian Faith must be ready to lend their services to the accomplishing of this readjustment. Their Faith supplies them with motives strong enough to urge them to the service ; and it also sets up the high ideal of a universal brotherhood. It bids them labour earnestly and unceasingly for its realisation. The very complexity of the economic conditions of the present time challenges Christians, and bids them test their Faith. Whoever responds to the challenge and attempts this task will find that brotherhood, operating through liberty and equality, imparts the power which makes for the social ideal. Upon brotherhood, therefore, emphasis must be laid, and its behests must be obeyed.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE THINKER AND WORKER.

HAVING outlined the course along which social betterment is likely to proceed, and dwelt in some detail upon its agencies, an examination of the special functions of the thinker and worker must now be attempted. When this is done an illustration of the theory of utility in operation will be selected. This will show what need there is for a right ethical theory ; and as ethical principles constantly express themselves in economic practice, attention will be given to economics, especially to that science as Dr Thomas Chalmers treated and applied it.

I.

One cannot insist too strongly upon the necessity of observing with the utmost care the intimate relation of the thinker to the worker. Economic practice is, as just stated, largely the expression of ethical theories. Consciously or unconsciously, the thinker has always preceded the worker. Neither society itself, nor the many activities which distinguish it, and produce its bad as well as its good features are causeless. They are all the products of mental, moral, and economic factors. These should, therefore, be traced to their origin, and,

if possible, their course of development from stage to stage should be carefully observed.

It is, indeed, the special business of the thinker to examine with the utmost care all those principles which are assumed to guarantee a healthy and stable social life. The thinker has a definite task to discharge. His work is not an end in itself; rightly understood, it prepares the way for the worker.

One of the many classical illustrations which might be cited in support of this statement is that of Adam Smith. All who have studied the development of commerce recognise the splendid service which he rendered to trade. He carefully collected information respecting commercial transactions. He next applied economic principles to the material which he had gathered together. His reflections had as their result the discovery of those laws which govern commerce. It is the great distinction of Adam Smith that he was able to trace the operations of these laws; and to show what are the results when they are violated; and also what makes for commercial prosperity.

This is a good illustration of the need for the thinker preceding the worker. But indeed illustrations of this necessity are scarcely required; for in all departments of human activity designs and plans must first be drafted before the workmen can be set to their respective tasks. The reconstruction, or even the slightest improvement of society, is not an exception to this universal law. If it were thought possible to effect wholesome changes on the social structure without any regard to moral and economic principles, the folly of such proceedings would

soon become apparent ; and those who thus judged would soon receive a rude shock. Unfortunately it has often to be regretted that many social reformers pay too little heed to the necessity of examining the moral and economic principles on which their remedial measures are supposed to rest. The urgent need for the thinker and worker co-operating together is thus quite obvious.

II.

When an attempt is made by the student to examine the foundations of society a beginning must be made with psychological analysis. The mind is the key not only to nature, but also to society. The mind is ever in contact with, and ever leaves its impress upon matter. The material, indeed, according to many, is only what the mind conceives it to be. But without entering upon this disputed question, it is at least true that the mind can transcend the physical. It can investigate the wide realm of thought, and submit all social phenomena to a careful analysis. Hence for men in all ages the mind and its operations have been an engrossing study.

From the earliest times thoughtful men have discussed metaphysical questions. They have perceived that, in order to understand the physical world, it was necessary to make an endeavour to know what lies behind it. They were, accordingly, drawn to the study of the problems which the mind presents ; and they all, without exception, confessed the strange magnetic influence which the questions thus raised had upon them.

But abstract thought soon passed into what is known as psychology, or the study of mental states. Experience was compared with experience. The collection of information, more or less verified, offered a further inviting field within which were made at first tentative, and as time went on, more successful attempts at the classification of mental phenomena. This is the way in which metaphysics passed into psychology.

Mental science has not yet secured final and undisputed findings. The tests of those who are known as "the new psychologists," such as Fechner and Wundt, have not yielded anything like satisfactory results. They have attempted elaborate experiments in their laboratories. They have tried to project mental states on to a screen, but they have hitherto failed; for they cannot get beyond the measurement of physical processes. A time may, however, come when mental states shall no longer elude them; but that time is not yet.

Exponents of mental science, both of the old and new schools, have, however, reached certain definite conclusions. It is now recognised that the *thinking, feeling, willing* self is indivisible, and that it is misleading to speak of "faculties" of the mind, since this unfortunately chosen term lends colour to the mistaken idea, that the essence of personality is to be found in one or other of its manifestations.

But here a common objection must be removed. To some it may at first sight seem as if the consideration of all questions respecting the mind is aimless; and they may perhaps with impatience demand the investigations of, what they call, "practical questions."

But the study of mental science is, or at least may be, easily made practical. In the instance before us, observe how the conclusions already reached tell upon moral theories. Formerly, when the conception of so many "faculties" was entertained, moral philosophers were accustomed to single out one of the "faculties," and to base their moral theories upon it. *Thought*, *will*, and *feeling* were chosen by different schools; and it is not too much to say that for many years the consideration of more important subjects was delayed and social questions were forced into the background. Time was spent upon the discussion of terms, which should never have been used. Had indeed a sounder science of mental states been founded these discussions would never have taken place.

Historical illustrations of the manner in which moral philosophers proceeded are easily cited. Thus, Hobbes selected *feeling*, and made the *pleasurable* and the *good* synonymous terms. Bentham developed the theory of utility. Stuart Mill, Bain, and Spencer frankly rested their moral theories on the *pleasurable* and the *useful*. Within recent years attempts have been made to purge the moral theory of utility of all traces of hedonism, but even when so purged the theory takes chief account of *feeling*, and lays special stress on the *useful*.

Those, again, who hold that moral ideas are innate, alternate in their selection between *reason* and *feeling*. Cumberland, Price, and Cudworth, for instance, were all for the intellectual; and on the other hand, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Butler laid greatest stress upon the sentiments. Thus, among those who held that moral

ideas are innate and axiomatic, two views were entertained, and these gave origin to the intellectual and sentimental schools.

Idealists, who form a third and powerful class of moralists, sometimes take *will* and sometimes *reason* as the basis of morals. In their explanation of personality they claim to have discovered in the unity of self-consciousness, a principle deeper and profounder than all appearances, in terms of which they attempt to reconcile all differences. Stripped of philosophic terminology the following is a brief statement of their working principle. Applied to mental states, the unity of self-consciousness offers, they contend, a rational basis from which to proceed in the investigation of the subtle operations of the mind. The mind, they further maintain, is ever restlessly and persistently in search of the realisation of its own deeply-rooted sense of unity. Applied to morals, this principle, it is claimed, sets up an ideal; for, it is argued, there is much in the moral realm, which cannot be explained either by those who make the pleasurable and the good one and the same, or by those who hold that moral ideas are innate. Man cannot realise his life by means of what either of these alone, or these in combination can offer. He must ever pursue an ideal, an *end*. He must ever aim at the absolute satisfaction of an inborn craving for unity, and the perfection of his moral nature. Idealists have even gone further; for they regard each particular self as the imperfect realisation of a universal reason and they hold that the material universe must continue to be an unsolved enigma unless the unity of self-consciousness be assumed. This unity

alone is, in their judgment, the ultimate reality of things, and the reconciliation of the antagonism between mind and matter, spirit and nature.

So long as separate manifestations of the *ego* or self are taken into account, and one of them is treated to the exclusion of the others, imperfect theories of mental states and moral actions are bound to be formulated. This is not at all surprising. The unsatisfactory state to which mental science has been reduced, and the confusion which has prevailed among advocates of different moral theories, have been the main causes of the attempts which have recently been made to recast mental and moral theories. The attempts, however, have not been made easily. The rigid and doctrinaire advocates of utilitarianism and intuitionism have refused to surrender anything. Many of them have adopted a thoroughly unphilosophic attitude, and have insisted upon the acceptance of their own theories. Idealists have been more conciliatory. Recent exponents of idealism have been obliged, on the one hand, to take account of the concept of experience, and, on the other, of the postulates of intuitionists ; and they have therefore been able to give a larger and truer estimate of moral actions.

But far greater concessions must be made by all exponents of mental and moral science. A perfect synthesis must be attempted of all the data of self-consciousness. *Thought*, *will*, and *feeling* must be treated as the manifestations of the one indivisible essence, the living soul. Whenever and wherever this is done it will be comparatively easy to formulate moral theories which will do ample justice to all that lies

within the moral domain. A place will then, for instance, be found for those moral intuitions of which every person is conscious, whatever his theories may be. Special account will also be taken of the facts of experience. An *end*, an ideal of life, personal and social, towards which all that is deepest and truest in human life is ever striving will likewise be recognised.

The thinker rightly lays stress upon these things. They are not mere abstract questions. Theory always lies beneath practice. Whichever theory is most persistently advocated soon begins to tell upon business and social life. Under the influence of inadequate, not to say false, theories, sanction is often given to commercial transactions which are ruinous to the many, though perhaps profitable to the few. History is crowded with illustrations of the injurious effects which flow from false theories of life.

III.

The brief statement which has been made respecting mental science, and moral theories, is not intended to be academic. Mental science is all-important. It will always attract students ; but its intimate bearing upon ethics, and of ethics upon social affairs, are here chiefly to be noted.

At the present time there is nothing else more urgently required than a powerful mediating influence between conflicting mental and moral theories. The discussions now going on give promise of such an influence soon manifesting itself. Disputants are beginning to perceive that their theories must be tested in the field of our

common social life; and in addition, that history is throwing its clear light upon their contentions, and is proving many of them to be idle.

But though there are promising signs of a mediating influence which may reconcile opposing theories, patience must be cultivated. This will be done all the more readily when it is remembered that the tendency, as already seen,¹ on the part of abstract thinkers to dogmatise is always strong. It does not matter much what their subject may be, whether philosophy or science or theology, the tendency is ever asserting itself. Only the watchful can guard successfully against it.

Hitherto exponents of mental and moral theories have seldom been brought into actual touch with the severe struggle for existence in which great masses of the people are forced to take a part. They have pursued their speculations far removed from the strife of business, and the concrete needs of the poor. They have seldom, therefore, tested their theories by the legitimate and urgent claims of society. It is a healthy sign of the times, that more than one of these exponents have recently entered into the public arena, and have attempted a proof of the value of their speculations by an application of them to the State, to municipal life, and to business affairs. They are for the most part tyros at the task. They are often far amiss, but only the uninformed will judge them severely. Those who know what is entailed when one steps from the sphere of abstract thinking to that of actual life will not only hesitate to judge them, but will rather welcome their

¹ See p. 133.

assistance in the discharge of the task of trying to improve the conditions of social life.

It is not out of place here to observe that some of the thinkers who have entered the public arena, and have tried to improve the conditions of social life, have been those, who, in the quiet of their study, have developed what is in one sense a new, and in another sense a long-forgotten, theory of society. They have not originated it; but they have seen with great clearness that their theory of society necessitates that man should unite with his fellowmen, since it is in society that man finds the element and atmosphere in which his life grows strong and healthy.¹ The step taken by these thinkers was natural when they entered into public life, and took a part in improving its conditions; for, it was the outcome of the theory which they adopted.

IV.

It has been shown that mental science tells directly and powerfully upon ethics. In the same manner moral theories tell upon economics. The evidence of their close relationship lies only too obviously to hand. For a very long time the reign of utilitarianism was complete. The only test of moral actions which the great majority of English moral philosophers admitted was that of the *useful*. This moral theory stamped itself deeply upon commerce, politics, and even religion. A few sentences will illustrate this statement.

1. Commercial enterprises were conducted exclusively

¹ See p. 113.

with a view to personal interests. The welfare of the workers was scarcely ever considered. They were "hands," and nothing more. Masters consciously or subconsciously reflected in their transactions the moral theory which moralists propounded with great confidence. Employers of labour, indeed, pursued the line of least resistance in seeking their personal profit. Thus, the theory of utility in ethics passed into individualism in economics.

The advocates of the theory of utility strenuously deny that their theory excludes sympathy with others. But as it works out logically and in practice, the denial means little or nothing. Besides, the person who regards it as his first duty to please himself cannot rest short of the adoption of a severe individualism. To affirm the contrary is to contradict an almost universal experience.

2. Political measures were framed and passed under the influence of the utilitarian moral theory. Class legislation, against which in recent times a strong protest has successfully been made, became common. Statesmen did not hesitate to gratify the wishes of those who alone had political votes. The idea of enfranchising the working classes was not entertained; and many believed that no greater calamity could befall the nation than that of placing the names of working men on the political roll.

A long and severe contest had to take place before political rights were conceded to the working people. The explanation of the historic contest is largely found in this, that the moral theory of utility, which gave birth to individualism, was held by many to be true beyond

dispute ; and that other moral theories were beginning to displace utilitarianism, and were bringing into play humaner economics which the working people, perhaps unconsciously, but none the less truly, were gradually adopting.

3. The same theory of utility told also upon religion. In the religious sphere individualism took a singularly uninviting form. The salvation of the individual was everything, and an end unto itself. The conception of the kingdom of God, as that wherein every person must render service and find his own good in seeking that of his neighbour, was neglected and forgotten. The Church, therefore, did not think of the claims of the heathen or the lapsed at home. But again the new spirit, which awoke when the theory of utility was displaced, brought forcibly to the conscience of professing Christians the duty of caring for all classes. Gradually the Church realised that she is but the agent of the kingdom of God, and that she must use every endeavour to bring all people into the kingdom.

The awakening of the Church to a sense of her duty is widely attested ; but if an explanation of the enlarged labours which she has undertaken in many foreign mission fields be sought for, it will to a great extent be found in the new movement which equally affected politics and the Church. I am not here discussing the question, whether the Church is doing all that she ought to attempt, or whether she is as perfect as some, or as defective as others, think her to be. I am only offering an explanation of the change through which she has manifestly passed.

V.

In making these observations upon the operations of the ethical theory of utility, and its offspring in economics, it is not contended that there is not much of truth in this moral theory, and in the economics to which it gave origin. The concept of experience is an element in morals of which account must be taken. Again, the benefits which have come from individual initiative and energy, even when both are directed solely towards personal gains, are beyond question. These benefits should indeed be frankly acknowledged. But when utility is made the essence, and sole inspiring motive of moral actions, its claim to reign and rule supreme in all departments of human life must be tested by the facts of history. On purely philosophic grounds, many have set it aside. With equal decisiveness many more have been obliged to abandon it, because, as history shows, it issues in exclusiveness in relation to commerce, politics, and religion.

A deeper and truer conception of moral actions has within recent years been entertained and developed. A modified form of idealism now holds the field. This moral theory postulates an *end* which is in harmony with the unity of self-consciouness, takes account of experience, and in no wise contradicts moral intuitions. It translates itself into economics, and insists that each person must seek the realisation of his mental and moral powers.

In one sense, it is allowed, that the individual life is all important, and must therefore be developed, cultivated

and perfected. But with the utmost care it is also pointed out that the sphere within which development, cultivation and perfection are attained, is found in the lives of his neighbours. Self-realisation is only possible in society. Man needs his fellowmen. He cannot do without them. To labour for their good is to secure his own. This ideal excludes selfishness, and lays stress upon mutual brotherly service. It is a beautiful ideal, and all satisfying. Philosophy, sweeping the heavens of thought with its keen eye, has discovered nothing more inspiring than this ideal. Already it animates the utterances of many modern seers, as in ancient times it was really, though not definitely, expressed in any philosophic system, the inspiring power of prophets who spoke to their fellowmen in language which can never be forgotten. Great artists, ancient and modern, have had a vision of this lofty ideal. Their finest creations embody it. They have thereby inspired many to disinterested heroic actions; and the deeds which have enriched the world are those which have been performed in obedience to the inspiration that comes from a vision and pursuit of this ideal.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE THEORY OF UTILITY IN OPERATION.

I.

SINCE it is in the commercial sphere that the operations of the principle of utility are most manifest, and since again these operations have told, and still tell upon all efforts to realise the social ideal, there is therefore ample justification for a careful examination of this ethical theory as it expresses itself in commercial affairs. This theory has enjoyed a long reign. It must then be instructive to observe its manifestations and to ascertain its products. When this has been done it will, we submit, become at once apparent that there is the most urgent need for the application to business transactions of the highest ethics if society is to be purified and elevated. When a rapid survey of the operations of the principle of utility has been made, I shall try to give prominence to the highest ethics.

I begin by noting that when utility as a working theory was applied to economic questions a severe conflict at once ensued. Without compunction, and without regret, business men made everything subservient to personal gains. The idea that a master could not do what he liked with "the hands" which he employed was scouted as altogether unreasonable.

Working men were treated as scarcely entitled to exercise any rights. Few, indeed, were given to them. But if they were regarded as having no rights, it is not surprising that they in turn thought little about their duties. For rights and duties are complementary, the one to the other. If the former be denied, the latter will be discharged in a servile spirit, and only under fear of dismissal or punishment of some kind.

When individualism reigned supreme the children of the working classes were sent to work at an age little beyond that of childhood. No restrictions were placed upon the hours during which they and women might be employed. Everything was considered severely from the point of view of personal advantage to the masters. The only question was, how much operatives could produce. The factory system at once illustrated, and also condemned, individualism.

The conditions of things were better as between landlords and farmers, and between farmers and their servants, though the latter were ill-housed, and received only a small wage. Landlords generally took a kindly interest in the welfare and well-being of their tenants. From generation to generation farms were held by the same families. A strong bond of affection often united the members of these families to the lords of the manor, who in turn dealt generously with them.

These conditions were, however, speedily altered when rich merchants came to buy and hold land. These merchants carried with them into the country districts the ideas of rights which governed their actions in the factory. Their first, and chief, concern was a large return

for the money which they had expended. If the hopes entertained by the new landlords were not realised they did not scruple to raise rents, and let their farms to the highest bidders, irrespective of family traditions. Thus, the new proprietors of land became worse landlords than the old. They applied, without hesitation or self-rebuke, the economics of the factory to the field.

The most conspicuous illustration of the economics of the factory was supplied by the Manchester school. Its members held and taught that it is the privilege, if not also the duty, of masters to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest markets. They applied this principle to labour as well as to goods. Hence the origin of the economic standard, "the market price of labour."

They rewarded labour not according to what it produced, but at the lowest price at which it could be bought. No regard was paid to the workman's means of subsistence, or to his reasonable needs. These were never considered. If any master had proposed such a standard of remuneration other than that of "the market price of labour," or if he had suggested that there should be a sharing of the profits after masters and workmen had received a wage, or had said that the capitalisation of labour was a possibility, his fellow-masters would doubtless have concluded that he had parted with his reason. The thing in itself was altogether unreasonable. They never gave it serious attention; and, it may be added, nor have the majority of their successors until they have been driven to consider the claims of the worker by the insistent appeals made not only by workmen themselves, but also by philosophic economists who have based them

upon broad humanitarian grounds. "The rights of labour" is a comparatively modern conception. For many ages, and during the slow evolution of industrial problems, man was regarded as a mere chattel, and was treated only as goods are handled.

With these ideas prevailing the rise of an economic school, like that of Manchester, became inevitable. The great majority of its members were men who thought chiefly of their own interests, and did not perceive that they were sacrificing the interests of others in pushing their economic principle to its logical conclusion. Their opposition to the passing of the Factory Acts is historic. It gave a concrete illustration of their economics.

Few to-day defend them, though many follow them in their business transactions. But their theories cannot stand an impartial investigation: for these, when tested by practice, work out in the interests of the few, and to the disadvantage of the many. These are results which cannot be justified. At least, reasonable people, whether they be informed economists or not, say that such results contradict moral judgments, social instincts, and are altogether indefensible.

II.

A remarkable circumstance must, however, be noted when an examination is made of the principles and actions of this school of economists. Good men strenuously and persistently opposed the passing of the ameliorative Factory Acts. Popular leaders, like Bright and Cobden, were among the foremost in denouncing the Government

which proposed legislation for the relief of the hardships to which women and children were subjected. They appealed to economic principles when they contended that they could do what they liked. They were free, they argued, to engage women and children for ten, twelve, or fourteen hours each day. They predicted that trade would be wrecked if freedom of contract were not allowed. They alleged, as some employers of "half timers" still allege, that child labour is necessary.

It is, indeed, a marvel how good and sincere men ever thus argued. Experience has shown that their fears were groundless; but to understand the position which they deliberately adopted, the moral theory which they also accepted, as true and valid, must be recalled. Utility was generally held to be the basis of morals. The useful was the right. Business men put their own interpretation upon this theory; and under the protection which it offered they were able to pursue their own personal ends, and at the same time persuade themselves that they were doing no wrong.

It would perhaps be too much to assume that all the business men, who followed the Manchester School, had a reasoned theory of morals, or of economics. Many of them must have acted without giving to either theory serious reflection. What others did was for them enough, and they may not have troubled themselves beyond the effort of trying to ascertain what course their fellow-masters pursued. But while this may hold good, it is still true that business transactions are the expression of some moral principle.

Many maintain at the present time that business

men follow the dictates of self-interest, and that almost all are practical adherents of utility.

This may be a true contention ; if so, it proves the need for education, and especially for those, who profess the acceptance of a higher ethical theory, applying it to their business affairs. But this contention, even if true, does not invalidate what has been said respecting moral theories as lying behind and explaining actions ; and, if it does not, then there is the strongest reason for insisting upon the highest ethics. If social life is to be purified and elevated ; if business transactions, which tell in many directions upon social life, are to be made to aim at the good of all, it becomes imperative that moral theories of the highest order must be propounded and enforced, explained and obeyed.

III.

This raises a large question to which I shall return in a moment ; but meanwhile I briefly advert to the formation of combinations on the part of working men. Reference has already been made to these combinations ; but here I allude to them in order to show that they are the necessary outcome of false economic conditions under which workmen are placed. The application of a rigid economic theory by masters drove the workers to trade-unions, as a means of self-defence. At first they rose in revolt, and tried by means of *strikes* to enforce their claims. But they soon discovered their powerlessness. They had no organisations on which to fall back. Strikes therefore as a rule failed, or at best only called public attention to the complaints of the workmen.

Their repeated failures, and the drastic experience through which they passed, however, brought home to the minds of workmen their need for organisation. Hence arose trade-unions. These, as we have seen, were defensive institutions, and were meant to safeguard common interests. But like all merely defensive organisations they were often strained, and made to serve ends for which they were never intended.

A defensive attitude, whether expressed by a creed or by laws and regulations which a society of men may adopt, is always difficult to maintain. Those who adopt it are strongly tempted to pass beyond its limits. Witness the religious creeds of Christendom. Instead of defending a position that had been assailed, which was their original design, creeds have often been converted into instruments of persecution. The same principle operated in economic life.

Perhaps to some it may seem strange that in connection with religious beliefs and workmen's disputes, an identical principle should be found in operation. But human nature is very much the same whether its tendencies be observed in intellectual, moral, or material affairs. In the instance before us trades-unions, while they organised *strikes* and made them more effective, soon passed beyond their own province. They became instruments of unjust oppression. For, no impartial person can attentively watch the use which is sometimes made of them without seeing that they often inflict hardships upon those, masters and workmen, who refuse to submit to their rigid regulations. This holds good of defensive organisations whether instituted by employers of labour or by

operatives ; for masters as well as workmen have their unions, and both are tempted to misuse them.

IV.

The origin of trades-unions, and how they came to have a definite influence deserve special attention. They were a protest against a false economic principle, which even good and kind-hearted men obey only too faithfully. Though chiefly concerned with the question of the origin of trades-combinations, one cannot resist the reflection that if these good men were better informed, an enormous boon would be conferred on society.

They are far from even wishing to be unjust in their business transactions. Many of them are high-class men who would willingly make sacrifices for the good of their fellowmen ; but severely excluding from business affairs all that is implied in their profession of attachment to the highest ethics, they are content to apply moral and economic principles, which are only worthy of people emerging from a semi-barbarous state. This is not said of them by way of reproof, but with regret ; for, the large employers of labour are powerful factors in society ; and when business is made to obey the teachings of the highest ethics social life will be speedily transformed. Trades-unions, wisely used, may accomplish some worthy ends ; but just because they are essentially defensive they can never become effective remedies of the ills from which workmen suffer. Remedies must be positive. Trades-combinations and masters' unions, like everything else in the evolution of social life, are stages

of progress. They are not final institutions. They must give place, and are indeed already giving place to something better. The agencies of progress must not only be positive, but they must also command the assent and approval of masters and workmen. There must be cordial co-operation on the part of both towards a common end.

Nothing else can guarantee such co-operation save obedience to the dictates of the highest ethics. This brings us to the subject which we have undertaken to consider in its outline—the need for the highest ethical standard if social life is to be purified and elevated.

V.

The student of history cannot fail to observe two powerful tendencies which have made, and are still making for this standard. The one is industrial, and the other is purely philosophical.

On the part of workmen there is a deeply-rooted discontent with the economic conditions under which they are obliged to toil, and with the inadequate means of subsistence placed at their disposal. They have not clearly perceived what is the remedy for the ills of social life. They have often blindly and impetuously seized agencies which promised them relief, but the aid which they eagerly expected has not yet come. Some have, therefore, become disappointed, sullen, and ready for any revolutionary scheme; others, however, have not lost hope. They have set themselves to the study of social

questions; and on their part there is a very persistent demand for a higher ethical standard than that of utility, which has hitherto been applied in business transactions. This demand is ever growing in force and volume. It is claimed that unbrotherly competition should cease; and it is contended that it can only terminate when brotherhood is realised, which means that each person should labour for the good of others as much as for his own. It scarcely needs to be added that a state of society in which brotherhood is the chief factor implies the setting up of the highest ethical standard. It is not too much to say that the industrial changes of the day are making for this end.

VI.

But the same result is reached by philosophers in their search after knowledge of the meaning of life, and of the best means by which to realise life in its fulness and perfection. This is the other tendency, and its operations are easily traced. It is not necessary to give a long list of the names of the men whose philosophic writings embody and express this tendency; but the subjects of which they treat can be easily indicated. Thus, from the earliest times there have been philosophers who looked for an explanation of moral life in *that* which lies beyond the sensuous, and who had dim intimations of a moral *end* worthy of the best endeavours that could be made to reach it. In this lay their ideal. Plato is pre-eminently the representative of these thinkers in ancient, and Hegel in modern times.

For a very long period the discussion of moral ques-

tions was carried on in the most abstract manner. Witness the Schoolmen to whom subtle distinctions respecting *nominalism* and *realism* were everything. In comparatively modern times philosophers have been obliged to relate their theories to practice. Their theories have been either *utilitarianism* or *intuitionism*. In the contest between them the former gained the greater number of adherents, who strongly declared for individualism in economics. Moral intuitions and the possible economic system which might have been based upon it, were ruled out of court.

Scarcely as yet had those German philosophers, whose contributions to moral questions were destined to revolutionise moral theories, made their influence felt upon British moralists. "Ethical systems," says Professor Sidgwick,¹ "from Hobbes downwards, have been of essentially native growth, showing hardly any traces of foreign influence." But already Kant had given elaborate proof of the reality of an ideal world and of "the categorical imperative." Hegel had also developed idealism, but as yet he scarcely affected the views which British moralists had been taught by Hobbes and Bentham to adopt. He attracted the attention of only a few British thinkers. The majority were either ignorant of his invaluable contributions, or if they knew them they also set them aside, with the result that the theory of utility was still supreme.

But a great change soon came. The Cambridge moralists, Cudworth and More, in the seventeenth century prepared the way for the Scottish School,

¹ *History of Ethics*, p. 237.

represented by Reid and Dugald Stewart, a century later; and these together assailed the theory of utility. Their work, however, was not final. It required the contributions which Fichte, following and at the same time correcting Kant, was able to make when he emphasised the moral ideal as the guarantee of man's development, and especially the contributions of Hegel, who, while outlining idealism, also showed that social relationships are necessary for the perfecting of the individual life.

Schleiermacher and Rothe carried still further the affirmations of their predecessors, and developed a theory of society which, while allowing ample scope for the individual, calls special attention to social duties and the realisation of a perfect social life.

The teachings of recent German moralists have deeply and permanently affected ethics. They have contributed much to the setting aside of *utility* as a final theory of right moral actions. Idealism may be corrected, and also be modified. It may, as I have already shown, be so interpreted as to make room for all that is true in utility and innate moral ideas; but the high *end* towards which it summons all human efforts, and the prominence which it gives to social relationships, show how faithful it is to man's deepest instincts and highest aspirations. Selfish aims and the gratification of selfish desires, the widespread wrong and the misery to which selfishness leads, receive neither countenance nor justification from idealism.

But to be able to say so much as this is just another form of stating that the high ethical standard which

wholesome industrialism requires for its development alike in the interests of masters and workmen is identical with that which modern philosophy affirms to be essential alike in the interests of the individual and of society.

The two tendencies run on parallel lines. Their movement has been slow and chequered. Recent history, indeed, throws a searching light upon the long and dreary discussion of ethical and economic theories, and upon industrialism which bears so deeply the impress of these theories. It is needless to point its lessons. They are obvious to workmen and masters, to legislators, and to the recluse who ponders over social problems and their far-reaching issues. A silent economic evolution is now going on ; but only the clear-sighted can see the changes which may soon be effected in the social life of the people as the outcome of a demand for sounder and truer ethics.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ETHICS AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

I.

THE historical illustration, which has been given in the preceding chapter, of an ethical theory as it works out in economic practice, supplies one of the strongest arguments which could be adduced in proof of the need for the application of the highest ethical theory to business transactions. Ethical theory is not an abstraction. It is the formulated statement of principles and of rules of conduct ; and that which it represents is always making its influence felt in commerce, in politics, and in all departments of social life. Economic conduct, it cannot be repeated too often, is to a large and definite extent the direct outcome of ethical theory. The one cannot be separated from the other. Business men obey the dictates of the prevailing moral theory of their time. They translate the theory into their commercial enterprises.

If whatever is useful or ministers to personal gain and the gratification of personal desires be accepted as morally right, then, as already seen, business transactions will bear the stamp of this theory. It may entail suffering to many ; for personal gain, when made a motive and an end, always issues in competition of a ruthless

description. This, however, is such a common feature of trade dealings that little or no heed is paid to it. If for a moment it receives attention reasons, dictated by self-interest, are soon urged in its defence, and it is at once dismissed.

It has been seen that when individualism is brought to the test of a concrete example it fails. The opposition, based on this theory, which was offered against the passing of the Factory Acts, is a signal illustration of its failure. The significance of this failure cannot be over-estimated. It tells the social reformer very plainly that he must examine and re-examine his moral theory: for deep down in social life, and hidden beneath all its phenomena, moral principles operate. It is, therefore, vain to hope for a reconstructed society if ethics be neglected.

II.

It is not, however, enough merely to ascertain that moral principles are constantly in operation, and are telling decisively upon business transactions. Care must also be taken to discover the character of the ethics to which assent is given. It is, indeed, pre-eminently the duty of the social reformer to find out what ethical principles are obeyed by business men in carrying on their commercial transactions. He may, on the one hand, learn that the great majority of them are chiefly bent upon securing "profits"; and that they follow without any questionings the moral rule or rules which their fellow-merchants and traders seem

to obey. On the other hand, he may discover that there are many business men, whose word is as good as their bond, who are sincerely true to their light, and wish above all things to hand down to posterity an untarnished name.

But the discoveries thus made render it only all the more imperative that the social reformer should inform himself respecting the moral theories which obtain, and are translated into business transactions. Whenever this is done, he will next be obliged to decide upon the merits of opposing moral theories. It has been already shown that the only theory which will stand the test of experience, and make for a purified social life, is that of a modified idealism ; and, in my judgment, the acceptance of this theory will go a long way towards making social reconstruction comparatively easy.

Other theories have been tested and tried, and have been found wanting. They do not supply adequate motives to disinterested actions. They do not set up a sufficiently worthy ideal. Those who obey them are too often content with the present economic factors, and see no urgent need for the application of higher economic principles.

Unlike these theories, idealism is in harmony with man's nature. It does ample justice to his longings for a better state of things. The *motive*, that of self-realisation through seeking the good of others, is all powerful, and urges those who come under its influence to rest satisfied with nothing less than a transformed society. It is, besides, of the very essence of idealism to set up a worthy end. It calls all the potentialities

of human nature into play, and insists that attainments are only preparations to more strenuous endeavours after higher things.

Some, I am aware, will question these statements and describe even a modified idealism as Utopian. But let this moral theory be rightly understood, and let social transformations, which have already been effected, be examined, and it will be clearly seen that this theory alone explains the successful social efforts which have been made to improve the lot of the toilers and to elevate society. Idealism when modified to the extent of allowing a place for man's moral intuition, and the concept of experience is really that moral theory which adequately accounts for the social improvements which have been already effected.

Self-seeking along the line of least resistance, which is the chief note of utilitarianism, cannot explain them; and even intuitionism, which is much higher and more defensible than the theory of utility, fails to supply the motive power that issues in an improved social life.

So far as it goes intuitionism is a remarkable explanation of certain moral phenomena, but it cannot afford a satisfactory interpretation of all moral actions. Besides, it is a grave fact of which account must be taken that evil has entered into human life, and has blunted man's moral intuitions. I am not here dealing with the problem of evil, but with the fact of it, of which unhappily there is no uncertainty. Human experience witnesses only too mournfully to its presence and influence. The moral intuitions are, therefore, deeply affected by evil.

How they are adversely affected is seen in this, that

evil, being the assertion of self, always tends towards self-gratification, and never makes for the good of others. It takes no notice of their interests. Rather it over-rides them. Since, therefore, moral intuitions constantly feel the presence of evil and have to contend against it, intuitionism supplies neither the adequate *motive*, nor the worthy *end*, both of which are essential to social transformation.

III.

Idealism, on the other hand, when it recognises what is true in the theories of utility and moral intuitions and gives a place to what is thus true, cannot rest satisfied with the wretched poverty which is the lot of hundreds of thousands, nor with the economic factors which work out only in securing benefits to a few. Its nature and character urge men on to higher and better things. It sets no limits to strivings after the ideal.

But just because idealism sets up an altogether worthy goal in the efforts to attain which, mankind is ever becoming better and better, its opponents imagine that they have successfully disposed of its claims when they describe it as Utopian. This epithet is easily used, but it is generally employed by the short-sighted.

Fortunately there are great historic movements which prove that ideals once confidently pronounced as Utopian, have in the evolution of society been realised, and that too not only to the satisfaction of those who always believed them to be possible of realisation, but also of those who opposed them.

There was, for instance, a time when slavery obtained. That serfdom should rise on its ruins must have appeared impossible to those who looked behind, and not before them. It was, in the judgment of all such persons, altogether Utopian to believe that a time would come when slavery should be universally condemned. Their contracted vision prevented them from seeing such a time.

Slavery, however, gave place to serfdom which was not, it is true, an ideal social state, but it was much better than slavery. That serfdom, again, should be superseded by the Guilds and these by *wage-earning* must also have seemed Utopian to many ; but serfdom could not be the final social condition of the great masses of men and women.

It had, therefore, to make way for the Guild life and it again for wage-earning, which cannot, many believe, be the final stage in social development. A condition of things is conceivable under which men, perceiving that the good of all is the good of each, may willingly consent to the distribution of the fruit of mental and manual toil according to the amount and value of the service rendered, or simply according to needs.

Now, when one inquires what moral theory accounts for and explains these social advances, it is plain that they cannot be traced to the operations of the theory of utility. This long applauded theory may account for many moral actions, but not for those of the highest order. It offers an explanation of the competition which stamps itself deeply upon society as presently constituted. Inequalities are also its products. But

there are few people who are really satisfied with the operations of the theory of utility, while many are profoundly dissatisfied with its issues ; and these, therefore, are obliged to acknowledge that the advances which have been made from stage to stage in social life, can only be explained by a theory which, operating on an extended plane and throughout a long period of history, justifies itself.

This theory they find in idealism. It alone really accounts for the changes which have been made in social life from the stage of slavery to that of wage-earning, though it has seldom been, until recently, acknowledged by the schools. The past should be a guide for the future. Great changes must be made in society. The present condition of things cannot continue for ever ; and it is, I repeat, the duty of the social reformer to ascertain what moral principles have effected the most wholesome changes.

IV.

It is now evident that a moral theory must be adopted which will bear the whole weight of a healthy social structure. This theory must contain imperatives which, on the one hand, forbid selfishness, and, on the other, demand disinterested service. There is, indeed, no effective remedy for the social evils of the day unless the moral foundations of society be strong, and able to sustain the entire weight of the social fabric.

The ethical holds by right, and also by necessity, an important part in social life. If society is to be trans-

formed the ethical power cannot be eliminated with impunity. There is no substitute for this power.

Perhaps the most notable object-lesson of the need for moral influence and direction is given in recent socialistic efforts to establish a new condition of social life. These efforts have not been crowned with success; they have not even made the progress which many anticipated, and why? It is largely because those who are responsible for them have adopted the Marxist doctrines; and, following Marx, have attempted a reading of history which is almost wholly materialistic. They have also to a great extent isolated economics from morals.

In this they have been abetted and encouraged by a school of economists, who have nothing of their social aims. The members of this school persist in loudly declaring that economics must not be associated in any way with ethics. Economic science, they allege, concerns itself with material things, and has only to do with the production, exchange, and distribution of commodities. Unfortunately many social reformers adopt this reading and interpretation of economics, notwithstanding the strong protest which fervent social reformers like Dr Chalmers made many years ago, and which has been repeated by a number of economists, of whom Professor Marshall at the present time is the most distinguished representative.

But social life cannot be explained in terms of material things alone; and therefore Socialism, so long as it assigns the chief place to material things, cannot command assent to its claims. The object-lesson which Marxists

thus give should not be left unread. Many earnest people, who have a great passion for social improvement, are misled by Marx's materialistic reading of history. I refer here to the mistake which he made in order to illustrate the contention that morals cannot be safely separated from social life.

V.

But whenever the moral element is emphasised the old question again and again emerges, what theory of morals is to be adopted? Every generation claims the right of attempting to answer this question. If one may judge from the number of volumes which are issued from the foreign and home press on ethics the present generation is not an exception. It has just been shown that a modified idealism accounts for the great and wholesome changes which have been made on society, and that it explains the progress of the past, and aspirations as to the future.

A serious mistake would, however, be made if it were assumed that all moralists are satisfied with either the methods of former investigations, or the results to which their adoption has led. The moral foundations of society are indeed being investigated to-day with a new zest. Anthropology has been called into service. The results of the labours of writers, like Bachofen and Morgan, have been accepted by many authorities. These have maintained that there is little or no evidence of the moral factor in the earliest evolution of society. The family, for instance, is held to have had in the earliest stages no

existence ; for mankind, it is further maintained, passed through a primitive promiscuity, and the family was only evolved at a later stage in social development.

But Howard in his *Matrimonial Institutions*, and Westermarck in his *History of Human Marriage*, have shown that the family is one of the most ancient institutions, and that from its inception the moral element has always been present. I am not here dealing with Dr Westermarck's *theory* of morals, to which I shall refer in a moment, but only with the fact that he and other recent investigators in the field of anthropology are at one in holding that morals have always played a determinative part in social relationships.

To the same effect is the testimony of Mrs Bosanquet, who, in her work on *The Family*, says, " Throughout all changes the characteristic feature has persisted that father, mother, and children have formed one group, of which the father has been the head in the sense of being not only the master, but also of being responsible for its protection and maintenance."¹ Mrs Bosanquet, like many others who have examined this subject, finds that morals lie at the basis of the family life.

The study of anthropology can only, however, supply us with facts very important in themselves, but not final as to the moral theory which may explain them. Given the facts, moralists must attempt to rationalise them ; and this is what many writers are trying to do at the present time.

One of the most notable of these writers is M. Maurice Maeterlinck, who says that " we are assisting at the more

¹ p. 39.

or less unconscious and feverish elaboration of a morality that is premature.”¹ After noting that, in his judgment, “a large portion of mankind is gradually forsaking the religion in which it has lived for nearly twenty centuries,” he proceeds to say that it is setting out, not to enter another religious temple, but “to go nowhere.”

Maeterlinck places moral actions in three categories. These are designated *common sense*, *good sense*, and *mystic reason*. Common sense gives sanction to moral actions dictated by utility, and to every material instinct and enjoyment. Good sense “still considers utility, but already admits its spiritual and sentimental side.” When Maeterlinck deals with mystic reason he discusses moral ideals which he tentatively traces to “superior instincts” or to the life of the species.

It is interesting to observe that this eminent writer recognises different categories into which moral actions must be placed. He thus perceives a truth of the greatest value. It is difficult to accept his categories; but *that* which he strives to express is *that* which gives justification for some moral actions being explained partly by utility, and some partly by intuitionism, and all only fully by an idealism which allows room for these moral theories, but at the same time insists upon a category large enough to contain the highest moral actions.

Maeterlinck frankly says that he does not really know what gives origin to the highest moral actions and aspirations. Imagination, he thinks, here, as in physical science which postulates hypotheses, comes into

¹ See *Fort. Rev.*, Jan. 1906.

play. This does not lead one far. All that Maeterlinck is quite sure about is, that he is entitled to sing the song of triumph over religion as decaying, effete, and no longer of any use. He eliminates such virtues as self-sacrifice, resignation, and says "we are no longer lowly in heart and poor in spirit." He thus tries to get rid of what is most distinctive in Christian ethics ; but he is all for the old Aryan ideal of justice, conscientiousness, courage, kindness, and honour. He holds that "the spiritual road " by which the higher virtues are reached "must remain intact, and is still necessary for the man who wishes to go further than simple justice."

Maeterlinck unconsciously attempts a synthesis of conflicting moral theories. He renders good service in so far as he shows that a reconciliation of these theories is possible ; and though perhaps he would not admit it, yet he is an idealist who generalises from observation without taking into account all that the advocates of moral theories have to say in support of the positions which they have respectively adopted. He is also, without being fully aware of it, an upholder of religion, though he disowns the term ; for, in giving prominence to man's spiritual nature he emphasises the religious element. But it must be added that Maeterlinck makes only a small contribution to the elucidation of morals, while in so far as he is negative he is not helpful. His negations are too sweeping.

Mr H. G. Wells, in his *New Worlds for Old*, recognises fully that the moral factor must play an important part in social development. He does not, however, discuss moral questions at any length. He postulates *good-will*,

and finds in the content of that term all that is needed to urge men to serve each other, and to labour for the realisation of the social ideal. His outline of the reign of Socialism is drawn with a firm hand ; but it must be said that while *goodwill* is indeed a powerful motive to service, other moral qualities and ideals are absolutely demanded in order to the betterment and perfection of social life.

Dr Edward Westermarck in his recent work on *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideals* is of another school. He is a keen observer of moral phenomena, and also an eminent anthropologist. He has attempted an elaborate statement of moral questions. He traces moral judgments to moral emotions. He dismisses as unreasonable the objectivity of moral law, and will have nothing to do with general moral truths.

Moral distinctions and questions of right and wrong are reduced by him to subjective states. "If I say that it is wrong to resist evil, and yet resistance to evil has no tendency to call forth in me an emotion of moral disapproval, then my judgment is false."¹ This sentence explains Westermarck's position ; but as he proceeds he gives abundant proof that he is obliged to broaden his basis ; for when a person, he says, pronounces an act to be good or bad, the judgment has reference "not only to his own feelings, but to the feelings of others."² He adds, therefore, to individual disapproval social disapprobation when trying to supply evidence that a given action is right or wrong.

"Moral emotions" is the one category in which

¹ Vol. i. p. 17.

² P. 105.

Professor Westermack places all moral actions. He has much to say in support of his position; but most people, while recognising the great service which this distinguished writer has rendered to an adequate interpretation of society, will feel themselves obliged to confess that they are not greatly aided by him in trying to understand the origin and end of moral actions. He gives the theory of utility a new setting, but he leaves out of account the higher moral aspirations of mankind, and therefore his generalisations, though always acute, are defective.

Within quite recent times another attempt has been made to explain morals. This is perhaps best exhibited in the philosophy which Dr Schiller expounds under the designation of *Humanism*,¹ and Professor James, under the term *Pragmatism*.² The name of the new school is, however, of less importance than the movement itself, though it may be said that the word *Humanism* is so closely associated with the *Renaissance* that many object to the appropriation of this term by a school which cannot claim to be more intellectual, or more anxious for "a return to nature," than are other schools; and as for the uncouth term *Pragmatism*, it should, according to its derivation, express an explanation of life based on facts, whereas it is employed to define a philosophy, which has as its chief feature what is "workable."

But this apart, pragmatism itself makes considerable pretensions. It claims to set aside all academic discussions about ultimate truth and ultimate reality. In

¹ See *Humanism and Studies in Humanism*, by Dr F. C. S. Schiller.

² *Pragmatism and A Pluralist Universe*, by Prof. Wm. James.

the judgment of pragmatists, the truth and reality of the world are man's workmanship. Man is, therefore, to be credited with them.

This is a very large claim, and the question at once arises, Can it be substantiated? The answer which pragmatists return is beautifully simple. Truth, they say, is just a serviceable way of gaining an ordered outlook on life; and reality is just a character which man gives to phenomena. The older utilitarians reached their conclusions after, as they thought, a complete demolition of intuitionism; pragmatists reach absolute findings after, as they believe, an altogether successful refutation of idealism.

An old controversy is thus raised in a new form. According to utilitarians, moral laws are simply customs moulded by reflection. Pragmatism is a return to utility. It makes all moral questions depend upon the answer to the question, "Are they workable?" According to Professor James, thought and things are to be tested by their "cash-value." Again and again he asks, "Are they workable?" If not, they must be dismissed as of no account. Professor James in his recent work, *A Pluralistic Universe*, restates his pragmatic principles. Without the will to believe, truth, he says, remains hidden; and "things 'reveal themselves soonest to those who most passionately want them.'"¹ His refutation of monistic idealism carries with it an "intellectualism" as difficult to explain as anything in idealism, while it also assumes a unity in nature.

There is a finality about the utterances of prag-

¹ P. 176.

matists that is very captivating. But apart from the ethics of their philosophy, it should be said that they all make their contribution to the solution of moral questions, having it as their aim to do something towards the betterment of society.

VI.

I have selected the theories of recent writers in order to show that new attempts are constantly being made to find a satisfactory explanation of moral actions. Every generation, as I have said, has its own way of looking at moral questions. In an age which is all for physical science, morals have been subjected to a new treatment. The results can scarcely be described as startling or conclusive. The truth is, that the mind with its subtle operations easily eludes the keenest observation to which physical science can subject it.

There is to-day, among exponents of moral philosophy, an almost unanimous consensus of opinion, that while anthropology and the physical sciences may throw light upon moral actions, yet personality has its own distinctive province with laws *sui generis*, which are ever in operation. It reveals its secrets to those only who thoughtfully and sympathetically study all that lies within its wide province, and also to all that belongs to society, as that through which the personal life is realised. In the opinion of many of these exponents, idealism offers by far the most satisfactory explanation both of personality and society. It takes a wide survey of the moral realm, and supplies

adequate motives and aims to moral actions. It sees the profound unity of human life, and man's dependence upon his fellowmen. It takes careful note of the persistent efforts of the human spirit towards self-realisation ; and it holds firmly by those truths, because it has reached the conclusions that there is a universal reason of which each particular self is an imperfect realisation ; and that there is a universal experience of which the individual experience, having its own characteristics, is a manifestation and witness.

These conclusions are all important to the exponent of ethics, since they enable him to do justice to all moral phenomena, and to offer an explanation of moral life. But these conclusions are also all-valuable to the social reformer who aims at social reconstruction ; for he has been taught the truth of the unity of human life, the profound unity indeed of all life, particular and universal. And philosophy, coming to his aid, has further taught him that society is essential to the individual ; and that, according as man does justice to all the potentialities of his own moral aspirations, he will find a large sphere for disinterested service in the lives of his fellowmen, and thus make at least some contribution to the betterment of society and its permanent reconstruction.

CHAPTER XXV.

ECONOMICS AND DR CHALMERS' TREATMENT OF THE SCIENCE.

I.

I HAVE dwelt at some length upon ethics as an essential factor in social reconstruction. I purpose now to direct attention to economics, and especially to Chalmers' treatment of the science. I attempt this task in accordance with the plan outlined in a preceding chapter.¹

Ethics and economics have each their own place and yet are closely related, the one to the other. Ethical theory, it should be remembered, instantly makes its influence felt upon economic practice. It tells directly and powerfully upon politics, upon business transactions, and indeed upon all that pertains to social life.

The value of economics is equally great. It is constantly reacting upon character and affecting environment. Some in their eagerness to do ample justice to economics maintain that it is the most important factor in social life. They are all for emphasising economic factors and assigning to them the most prominent place. To do this is to look at society and the agencies used for its betterment in a wrong perspective. Economics,

¹ See p. 251.

when taken alone, cannot effect the transformation of society. The unity of human life, on the one hand, and the complexity of social problems on the other, demand additional factors, such as the intellectual and ethical, the political and the religious.

The too high estimate which some form respecting the value and functions of economic science should not, however, prevent one from recognising its rightful place. Wholesome economic principles have, without question, a far-reaching influence upon social life. Proper economic conditions are indeed all important. The place, therefore, which rightfully belongs to the science should be willingly assigned to it, and the operations of economic principles should be carefully observed.

II.

Since, then, economic science has such value, it is not without interest to recall the attention which has always been given to economics whenever the claims of society have been investigated. It is but to emphasise an historic truism to say that efforts towards the reconstruction or improvement of social life have invariably necessitated the study of economic conditions. And, as for the high place which the science holds in the estimation of all who study social phenomena, it is enough to point out that sociologists to-day rank economics as one of their chief subjects, and insist upon the need of giving to it special consideration.

But long before wide conceptions of society were entertained economics commanded attention. Professor

Ernest Nys of Brussels traces economics back to Accadian civilisation, and holds that the Babylonians' share in economics and jurisprudence is considerable. "They possessed," he says, "the technique of an extensive commerce."¹ Later, the Semitic and Hellenic races took over and elaborated economic theories, which were reproduced in the earlier and middle ages of the Christian era.² Plato, it is well known, discussed economic questions.³ Aristotle also discoursed upon the science, and was the first writer who used the term *political economy*.⁴

But to come to modern times, ever since the seventeenth century, writers on economics have been numerous. The publication of Montchrétien's *Traité d'Economie Politique* in 1615, Thomas Muir's *England's Treasure by Foreign Trade* in 1664, and Sir Joshua Child's *Brief Observations Concerning Trade* in 1668 called public attention to economics.

Writers on economics flourished in Italy, and among these the names of greatest prominence are, Lorenzo Ridolfi, St Bernardino, and St Antoninus; in France, where the *Economistes*, led by Diderot, D'Alembert, and Quesnay, taught in the pages of the *Encyclopédie* that *acheter c'est vendre; vendre c'est acheter*, and successfully revolted against the mercantile system, defended by Colbert, the Finance Minister of Louis XIV.; in Germany, where conspicuous service was rendered to economic science by Georg Agricola, Melchior Ossa, and Eberhard von Weyde; in the

¹ *The History of Economics*, Introduction, p. xviii.

² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

³ See *The Republic*, book ii.

⁴ See his *Economics*, book ii. ch. i.

Netherlands, where in addition to the economic investigations of Grotius, to whom every human interest had a charm, there were advocates of free trade like Dirk Graswinckel, and students of the science of finance like Marcus Zuerius Boxhorn; in Spain, where Pedro Belluga discussed such questions as the redemption of debt and usury, and Sancho de Moncada defended protection in the interests of Spanish industries; and in Great Britain, where Sir Dudley North in his *Discourse upon Trade* was among the first to outline a free trade policy, and where Hume, Kames, and above all, Hutcheson of Glasgow University, prepared the way for Adam Smith's great work on the *Wealth of Nations*, which was published in 1776.

This single work produced a revolution in economic science. Against the mercantile system, which laid undue stress upon mere finance, regarded money alone as wealth, and assumed that what is profitable to one nation is hurtful to another, Adam Smith emphasised "the productive powers of labour," and outlined the laws according to which its products "are naturally distributed among the different ranks of the people." Against the French *Economistes* who distinguished between the *produit total*, what the soil yields under labour, and the *produit net*, the products of other employments, he affirmed that labour is one of the main factors to be taken into account in economic science.

Adam Smith, while he struck an effective blow at national commercial jealousies, thus laid the basis of the theory of labour which Ricardo subsequently developed,

and which Marx and most Socialists have popularised. The far-reaching effects of Adam Smith's teachings are to-day on all sides recognised. They tell in all directions; but it should be carefully noted that Socialists, who attach an almost exclusive importance to labour, and in its name make their startling claims, as well as doctrinaire economists go back to Adam Smith, and profess to find in his conclusions materials for the justification of their respective theories.

The stage at which Chalmers intervened can now be easily seen. The science of economics was one of the subjects which attracted the attention of all interested in those social problems, to which the French Revolution and the writings of Condorcet and Godwin had given great prominence. Chalmers could not be indifferent to the spirit of his age; and as he was full of fervour for social betterment, he saw at once the importance of the study of economics, and the urgent need for a treatment of it in the light of the teachings of history, and also of those of the Christian Faith.

He was, accordingly, among the first of the religious teachers of his day to recognise its claims. He was one of the few clergymen who perceived that if society was to be improved, the improvement must owe much to economics. But Chalmers also saw its manifest limitations, and therefore the need for economics being informed and guided by the highest ethics.

III.

In this volume, which bears Chalmers' name, his economic teachings can be examined with great propriety.

It need scarcely be said that the economic principles for which he contended deserve at the present time the closest attention; for, with the explanation and illustrations of them which he has given, they make for social betterment, and ultimately for the social ideal.

Chalmers did not profess to formulate a new system of economics. He was, however, far from accepting the prevalent views of the science which obtained in his day. He ventured, therefore, to make, what he termed, "definite innovations," which, he said, "may long be disregarded or derided as paradoxes"—a prophecy which, unfortunately, has received a literal fulfilment. But Chalmers' contributions to Christian economics are bound to receive ample recognition; and when his name as an ecclesiastic may be forgotten, the service which he rendered to economic science, and through it to society, will be remembered with gratitude.

As already seen,¹ Chalmers took Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* for his text-book when lecturing on economics to the students of St Andrews. But while he accepted the greater part of the teachings of Adam Smith and Malthus, his personal study of the problems with which economic science deals led him to dissent from some of their conclusions; and further, to make a comprehensive statement of economic principles in the light of the teachings of Christianity.

It was said in Chalmers' day, as it is also repeated at the present time, that Christianity was on its trial, and that in presence of grave social questions it offered little or no help to its baffled adherents. Chalmers put

¹ See p. 18.

political economy on its trial, and carefully investigated the validity of the claims made on its behalf by exponents of the science.

He tested these claims by an examination of the efficiency of the remedies which it applied to the evils of social life. He made the not unjustifiable complaint that economists were too often satisfied if they succeeded in elaborating economic systems; and that they made their science an end in itself and not a means to an end. He maintained that these limitations were fatal to the usefulness of economic science. He, on his part, resolved to avoid this mistake. He, accordingly, made it plain at the beginning, and at almost every subsequent stage in the treatment of his subject, that the science should occupy "a place of subserviency or of subordination to the use which is made of it."¹

It has been made a charge against theologians that being, it is alleged, so enamoured of mere doctrines they lay too much stress upon systems of truths. There is, unfortunately, only too good reason for the complaint which is made. But it must also be recognised that economists have fallen before the same temptation. Chalmers was among the first to point out how easily they succumbed to it; and just as he, unlike many theologians of his day, was all for the application of the saving and enlightening truths of the Christian Faith to the improvement of social relations, so he also insisted that economic theories must be applied and tested in the wide field of social life.

He was not, however, indifferent to the value of a

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i., preface, p. v.

systematic statement of economic principles. He made, indeed, a careful digest of those for which he contended, and presented, as he says, his "doctrines in the form of a system";¹ but the system with Chalmers was always subordinate to "the use which is made of it."

It should be specially noted that he departed deliberately from the position which the majority of economists of his time occupied; and that he strenuously maintained "the possibility of a permanent amelioration in the economic state of the commonwealth," and of what he called "an enlargement in the sufficiency, and comfort, and whole status of the people."² He looked to the operation of moral factors for this amelioration and enlargement; but he trusted also in the adequate remuneration of the toilers. "Short of the question which touches," he wrote, "the good of their immortality," there is no other so profoundly interesting as *that* of "how to elevate by means of well-paid industry the general platform of humble life."³

He observed more clearly than most of his contemporaries "the inseparable alliance" between character and comfort. The one, he held, acts and reacts upon the other, and therefore he strongly declared for right economic conditions.

It was, indeed, his clear perception of this intimate relationship which largely induced him to devote much of his time, and his best energies, to the study of all that economic science affirms and teaches. He knew intimately, as will be seen, all the schemes which were

¹ See Appendix to *Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 42 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. viii.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

adduced as solutions of the social evils of his time by those who were deeply interested in the question of social betterment. He also sifted their claims with great care; and while he rejected some, he gave to others a cordial welcome.

He had a firm belief in what economics, rightly understood and taught, might accomplish. He therefore pointed out its influence upon foreign and home politics.¹ Economics, he held, must be studied not for abstract reasons, but because it enters into social improvement. He had a deep interest in the problems with which economic science deals; but his interest was chiefly on account of the light which the science cast upon the social evils of his day.

He regarded the science as charged with the important function of reviewing the conditions under which people live and earn a livelihood; and therefore those schemes of social improvement which promised better social conditions for the masses of the people were welcomed by him. To strong conservative instincts he added a fine discrimination; and when his judgment was on the side of a change of economic conditions he never hesitated to throw the whole weight of his influence in favour of the change, even though it might be of a drastic kind, and entail suffering on the part of those who advocated the change.

IV.

While giving to economics a definite place, Chalmers, however, held, and with great insistence taught, that

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. ii. pp. 34-37.

"the distempers of society are mainly resolvable into moral causes, and therefore that the removal of these can only be effected by moralising operations." He looked first and also ultimately for the success of all schemes of social amelioration and elevation to the Christian education of the people. This was at once the explanation and justification of his contention that character and comfort go together, and cannot be separated. His own writings witness to the fervour with which he justified their alliance. If regard be had only and merely to the economic welfare of a people; if nothing higher be aimed at, all, he wrote, is not accomplished which should be attempted; for "their moral and religious education is the first and greatest object of national policy."¹

His earnest contention, on the one hand, is that justice cannot be done to the social aspects of the Christian Faith unless the whole province of economics be examined. He thus anticipated Bishop Westcott, whose *Aspects of Social Life* is at once a defence and explanation of the Christian Faith and of economics. But on the other hand, he is equally emphatic in maintaining that economics must be purified by the ethics of Christianity. Complaint was made against him that he laid undue stress upon the moral influence of Christian education; but he repelled this charge, and showed that he was in favour of additional agencies of social betterment, such as taxation of land, and with certain modifications, of "a plan of national and organised emigration."²

¹ Preface to *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. xiv.

² *Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 151.

Chalmers' main economic thesis, which he states and illustrates in a great variety of forms, is that there are limits to the augmentation of a country's resources ; and the key to the interpretation of all his economic teachings is, that because there are such limits a country which has outgrown the means for its moral instruction, and in which obedience is not rendered to the highest ethics, cannot be saved from moral and economic decay. It was thus that Chalmers, anticipating writers of our time, like Professor Marshall, gave to economics a new meaning and a wider outlook ;¹ and it was thus also that he claimed for the Christian Faith a wide province within which its principles should be applied. The study of man and his needs, and the application of Christian principles to *wealth*, and to all the economic questions which cluster round it, operate directly, he maintained, towards the prosperity of communities and the attainment of the social ideal.

V.

In supplying proof and in giving illustrations of his main economic contention, Chalmers held a theory of wealth which reflects the opinions of the French *Encyclopédistes* without any of their materialism. This theory is an anticipation of the teachings of Ruskin, according to whom *wealth* is that which "makes for life." For Chalmers held with the *Encyclopédistes* that *wealth* is what the land yields. It is this in the first

¹ Economic science, says Prof. Marshall, "is on one side a study of wealth, and on the other and more important side a study of man."—*Principles of Economics* : Introduction.

instance ; but he also contended that in its wider signification *wealth* includes all that makes for man's health and prosperity.

In its strict economic sense he confined the term *wealth*, however, to the products of land. The products of manufacture, he held, are merely commodities which may be offered for what sustains life. With Chalmers the land and its products are all important ; and wealth with him is, therefore, always treated in relation to land and labour as the factor which constitutes the riches of a country.

Since Chalmers held this view strongly, he writes at considerable length upon *land*, *labour*, and *capital*. His theory of wealth also led him to deal with the conditions under which production, exchange, and distribution are carried on. These are strictly economic questions, and, as such, he dealt with them.

There are, it should be said, many economic issues which have been raised in our times. The terms, for instance, in which economics should be explained, whether they should be those of psychology or those of biology, is one of these issues ; another concerns itself with the method of investigation, whether it should be the *inductive* or *deductive* ; and a third is, whether economics should not be treated as merely a branch of sociology. Chalmers did not discuss these questions, for the reason that they were not raised in his day ; but he nevertheless dealt with the root questions in economics.

He has, therefore, much to say about land and the burdens it should bear ; about labour and its adequate

remuneration; about capital and its limitations; about production and the conditions under which wealth is acquired; about exchange and how it affects home products; and about the distribution of wealth through rent and wages, profits and taxation. He covered, indeed, the whole field of economics as the science was understood in his time.

But he did more. He brought a new spirit to the interpretation of economics; and his anticipations of present-day questions are to a large extent the outcome of his treatment of the science. I have already had occasion to notice some of these anticipations,¹ and others will be described in the closing chapter.

Meanwhile I must make a more detailed reference to his theory of wealth.

Adam Smith had spoken of the wealth of the country as consisting of the value of its annual produce of land and labour.² Malthus had defined wealth as "material objects which are necessary, useful, or agreeable to mankind,"³ to which Ricardo added the words, "and have an exchangeable value."⁴ Chalmers followed Adam Smith, but in all his discussions of wealth he keeps more rigidly by his description of its nature and functions than either Adam Smith himself or any of his followers do. All throughout he contends that the land's products are the support of life, and are therefore *wealth*.

It was objected by some that Chalmers kept too

¹ See p. 47.

² *Wealth of Nations*, Book ii. chap. iii.; iv. chap. i.

³ *Political Economy*, p. 28.

⁴ See *Malthus and His Work*, by Dr James Bonar, p. 212, for an interesting account of Ricardo's attempt to improve Malthus' definition.

closely by the French *Economistes*' theory of wealth; but this objection did not deter him from maintaining that the land and its products are the only real and stable things which constitute wealth. He disliked intensely the French writers' materialistic interpretation of social life; but even this dislike did not prevent him from seeing in their arguments respecting the original sources of wealth what was true and valid. Accordingly, he affirmed again and again that agriculture is the only term by which a nation's material prosperity can be measured. The land question, therefore, becomes all-important to him. He had much to say as to the conditions under which land may be made to yield the greatest increase, and also *respecting the burdens which it should bear*.

Thus he approached the question of land which already in his day was becoming urgent, and is now pressing with importunity for a solution. His theory of wealth begins and ends with the land. Commerce may multiply commodities, but land alone yields sustenance. And, since land holds this prime position it is impossible for those who aim at social betterment not to discuss the terms of the tenure upon which it is held, and the rights of all to a share in its products according as they directly or indirectly render service.

Had Chalmers done nothing else than raise the question of land on purely economic principles he would be entitled to honour. It is true that he did not foresee the claims which subsequent land reformers would make, and that the inferences which he drew from his economic argument might be used by them in pressing for even

larger reforms than those for which he contended. But his claims on the land were, as will be seen, very great, and his proposals very drastic. They startled his contemporaries; but to-day they are accepted by thousands of well informed economists, though the time has not perhaps yet come when his claims and proposals can be put to the test of experience. Signs, however, are not lacking that the time is coming, and coming rapidly. When it does arrive economists and reformers will find in Chalmers' theory of wealth, and in his treatment of the land question, arguments, based on economic grounds, which will support even larger claims than those which he made, and which, if justice be done to them, may issue in economic conditions favourable to all classes in the State.

The enfranchised scarcely yet realise how deeply the land question affects all social problems. Those who possess monopolies of land have still much on their side, and they still command the use of Parliamentary machinery. Changes, however, are sure to come, and if they have the support of enlightened economics and the highest ethics, those who surrender their land monopolies will not have smallest reward or least enjoyment, for they will see a general elevation of the status of all the people, and those economic conditions existing which, though they do not ensure well-being, are nevertheless necessary in order to the free operation of moral principles which alone guarantee welfare and well-being.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ECONOMICS : DR CHALMERS' METHOD OF INVESTIGATION.

I.

CHALMERS did not pronounce a hasty judgment on the remedies which were advocated by the social reformers of his day. He knew their schemes intimately. He set himself to the task of patiently investigating everything which was urged in support of them. He himself was all for moral improvement as against mere external remedies. He did not neglect the latter, but he was far from setting supreme and exclusive store upon them.

It will repay anyone who cares to examine Chalmers' politico-economic writings to turn especially to his enumeration of the external remedies which were pressed upon the attention of the public by the reformers of his time.¹ Their remedies were numerous. There is, indeed, scarcely one reform now advocated which was not then more or less distinctly outlined. The social evils of seventy years ago were not so acute as are those of to-day. There were then, it must also be remembered, fewer people interested in social questions than at the present time. We must add that the remedies were not sifted and tested as they have since been investigated. Nor were

¹ See *Political Economy*, vol. i. pp. 49 *et seq.*

politicians prepared then to attempt even to bring them within the sphere of "practical politics."

But Chalmers was alive to all the issues which were raised. He stands, indeed, among his contemporaries as eminently conspicuous for his wide outlook, his clear vision, and his keen sympathy. He studied, weighed, and closely examined all the social problems of his time. This is one of his greatest distinctions, for he devoted his attention to them when very few of his profession, and relatively few in any profession, gave them an hour's serious thought.

It is extremely interesting to note the remedies, as Chalmers enumerates them, which were offered and urged. Adequate means for the support of the increasing numbers of mankind were, he says, promised if one of "the vast variety of trades or employments in society" be followed; for "the highway for the relief of the unprovided is to find them a trade, to find them employment." Next, since many erroneously concluded that it is the province and function of capital to maintain labour, then, as parsimony and good management make for the increase of capital, practise, they urged, these virtues and social ills will largely cease. With gentle irony Chalmers comments upon this remedy, and notes with astonishment that in the opinion of "almost every economist of high name" the accumulation of capital makes for the subsistence of labourers! One is not surprised that he afterwards took special pains to refute this economic fallacy.

Again, some then, as now, staked everything upon a prosperous foreign trade. They congratulated them-

selves upon the multitudes that were supported by foreign products, failing to see that there must first be money or commodities at home to purchase foreign goods before they can be imported. Already also there were those who gloried in the motto that "trade follows the flag." They did not see, or seeing did not care, that the adoption of this motto led to cruel and useless wars.

Others found external remedies for social evils in the reduction of taxation, in the adoption of schemes of emigration on a large scale, and in "a compulsory tax on the wealthy for the relief of the destitute, so as to disarm poverty of its terrors and proclaim a universal impunity for dissipation and idleness." Lesser expedients "for all the disorders of the social state" were also propounded, such as the cottage system, the village economy of Owen, home colonisation, political reforms, and trades unionism.

The list of these remedial measures is, it will be seen, extensive. These remedies are really anticipations of those now discussed. Circumstances have changed ; but these proposals under different forms and names are at the present time receiving earnest attention.

Chalmers, it should be said, would be greatly misunderstood if it were assumed that he attached no importance to these remedies. He refused, it is true, to accept them as substitutes for a population proportionate to the resources of the country, and kept at that proportion through the influence of Christian education. But while he set the highest value upon such a population thus regulated, he declared for many of those practical reforms which are to-day strenuously

advocated by almost all who are dissatisfied alike with the present system of land tenure, and with that of industry.

II.

Chalmers decided, however, before discussing remedial measures and reforms, to make a thorough investigation of the resources of the country and the limits of agriculture ; and of the conditions under which the maximum of food may be taken out of the land. He examined the use which labourers made of their changed and improved conditions. He also made a special endeavour to ascertain what are the limits of land and commerce, of labour and capital. When he finished this prescribed task he was prepared to make those practical proposals respecting the taxation of land which lay the basis for a new system of land tenure, though he himself did not perhaps see the far-reaching effects of his teachings.

Chalmers' method of investigation has much to commend it. One cannot, indeed, easily resist the reflection which his method of investigation suggests, that an intelligent judgment respecting the social questions of the day is impossible until one has examined with care all those problems which it is the business of economists to state, and, if possible, to solve.

This constitutes a powerful argument in favour of the study of economics, but of a study directed towards practical ends. The professional economist is strongly tempted to limit his studies to abstract questions, and, as we have seen, he is apt to be content if he succeeds in

elaborating a system of economic truths. But the concrete needs of the poor demand that economics should be studied for the sake of the practical purposes which it may serve; and if one be interested in social questions and eager for a solution of them, the example of Chalmers must be followed. All those fascinating problems which the facts and phenomena of social life present, must be carefully investigated in the light of the teachings of economic history and of Christian ethics.

III.

But to return to Chalmers and the task which he set for himself.

1. He discusses the question of the resources of the country, and the limits of agriculture. He finds that the land on which cultivation is attempted, but which yields no rent, defines these limits. This led him to make a pronouncement upon the much disputed question as to what is meant by *rent*.

As might be anticipated, Chalmers, with his acute perception of the relationship of things, could not accept Ricardo's definition of rent, according to which it is the difference in price between any given land, and the poorest land in cultivation, which yields no rent or only a nominal rent. Against this definition, Chalmers maintained that "it is not because of the inferior soils that the superior pay a rent; but it is because the superior pay a rent, that the inferior are taken into occupation."¹ The different qualities of soil cannot,

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 320

he says, be "the efficient cause of rent." "The existence of the worse land, so far from originating a rent upon the better" prevents it from rising in value.

The real cause of rent is the strenuous competition of labourers and capitalists. This cause was assigned by Adam Smith as the explanation of rent,¹ and "ought not," says Chalmers, "to be superseded, as if it were a distinct and different cause, by that which, in fact, is but a consequence from itself."²

Now, here it should be said with special emphasis that Chalmers was chiefly concerned about a right definition of rent, because he perceived that the "inversion of the truth had led to vicious conclusions in political economy," and because he saw that the burden of taxation must rest on the land. "Rent," he wrote, "is not a creation of the will of the landlord";³ "rent is inseparable from property in land."⁴ It flows in upon the landlord *ab extra*, and not at his own bidding.

Increased population and increased capital create competition. The landlord seizes his opportunity. Chalmers observes that "the complainers of rent are themselves the makers of it." He ultimately finds in the increased sums paid as rent a strong reason why landlords should bear the burden of taxation. His interest in the question of rent is not, therefore, academical, but intensely practical.

2. But he also discusses this question, because he

¹ See *Wealth of Nations*, Book i. chap. xi.

² *Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 44.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

wished to ascertain the conditions under which the maximum of food may be taken out of the land. Accordingly he points out the commonplaces of economics, that the land, before it is able to afford rent, must first sustain the labourers of the soil, and those "secondary labourers" who supply them with implements, housing, clothing, etc.; that good land does this easily, and also supplies a surplus, a part of which is taken as rent; that improved agricultural agencies applied to relatively poor land may have the same results; and that when improved instruments are used, fewer labourers are employed, who work under changed conditions, which generally carry with them improvements and benefits to the toilers.

3. In stating these findings of economic science, Chalmers again had a practical object in view. He aimed at ascertaining what use labourers make of their changed and improved conditions. Workmen, he maintained, now work harder and live under better conditions than in former times. They may use well or ill their bettered conditions. Some may lapse into laziness and dissipation. Work may be to them irksome, and a severe task; and whatever they earn may be made to minister to what is lowest in human nature. Such will make no effort to take out of the land all that it might yield, and no attempt to reclaim poor soil. The pangs of hunger alone will force them to do work of any kind; but when their hunger is relieved they will revert to their indolent ways. The children of such people will have little or no chance of living healthy lives, and "a few only will survive

the sickliness and spare living to which they are exposed."

From all this Chalmers made the important induction of which economists are obliged to take special note, that indolence on the part of some labourers "accounts for the population being stationary in many countries where as yet the first-rate soils have scarcely been entered upon."¹

But in his analysis of human nature Chalmers points out that the excitement of new desires often rouses the indolent to work. Taste for idleness, he says, may give place to a taste for other things. A developed commerce also tends to create new desires. Better housing, better dress, and better food make for greater energy, and lead to more sustained toil. Economic conditions thus react upon character, at first, perhaps, slowly, but in process of time very effectively. Economic history supplies ample evidence of this change from indolence to activity. "This change of habit," says Chalmers, "has actually taken place in modern Europe. Workmen both labour more and live better than their ancestors."²

4. *Limits of Land*.—Sustained efforts of toil have, however, their limits, and that because land itself has its well-defined limits. For a stage is soon reached, Chalmers held, when the land, even under the most improved methods of agriculture, cannot be made to yield sustenance for the population which may increase upon it. The rate of increase of population is indeed far greater than that of the products of the richest and best culti-

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

vated land. If the growth of population be unchecked, the increase is, as Malthus maintained, in a geometrical, while subsistence is only in an arithmetical, ratio.

The possibilities of intensive scientific cultivation were not, and could not, be present to the mind of either Malthus or Chalmers. Since their time, as we shall see in the next chapter, experiments have been made with selected seed and specially-prepared soil; and these prove conclusively that, given fairly productive soil, there is really no limit to the land's productiveness when it is treated scientifically. The evidence of this is growing rapidly, and already there are those who compliment themselves upon the circumstance that there are large tracts of land not under cultivation, for they hold that the land presently cultivated, if scientifically and properly tilled, would yield all the food which the nation requires, and that the uncultivated lands are necessary as breathing spaces which should be free to all.¹

These possibilities were never within the vision of Chalmers, or that of any of his contemporaries. He and they, therefore, turned their attention to the subject of checks upon the growth of population. It was pointed out by several writers, but especially by Malthus, that the positive checks, *vice* and *misery*, are always operating whenever the population exceeds the capacity of the land to sustain it. Chalmers emphasised Malthus' arguments respecting the operations of these positive checks. But he laid, as we have seen, far greater stress upon the preventive checks than the author of the

¹ Mr Brougham Villiers so treats the land question in *The Nation*, January 23, 1909.

Essay on Population thought of doing. The *preventive* come into operation, says Chalmers, as the result of general instruction and especially of sound Christian education. Population, he held, must never be allowed to exceed the resources of the country; and the way to prevent an excess is not by issuing Malthusian tracts to the people, but rather by giving them good and useful instruction, which will issue in "a prosperous economic state."¹

Chalmers makes a strong point of the well-attested fact to which Adam Smith directed special attention, that something like a social revolution took place when the products of commerce tempted landlords to turn their idle retainers on to the land for the purpose of further developing its resources in order that they might be able to purchase more and more of these products. But whereas Adam Smith set himself to show that one commercial enterprise leads to another, and thus to the greater extension of commerce, Chalmers accumulated arguments to prove that even commerce is limited by the resources of the land and its actual products.

Thus, he came back to the land question. It was, indeed, always present to his mind. He saw its value when few economists turned attention to its place and influence in social development. He anticipated, therefore, those modern social reformers who rightly lay emphasis upon land as that which cannot be increased, but the products of which can be developed, and should be enjoyed by all.

Chalmers' chief economic formula is, that land governs

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 43.

labour, capital, and commerce; and, as will be pointed out in the next chapter, he was all for it bearing its legitimate burden of taxation. Though he did not express it in their terms, he went on the question of land taxation almost as far as the advocates of the taxation of land values, who propose "to nationalise land by the ultimate appropriation of the whole economic rent."

5. *Limits of Commerce.* — Commerce can only, Chalmers held, originate its own products. It furnishes commodities for the market, but it does not create the wealth which supplies the price of these commodities. "It does not furnish society," he writes, "with both itself and its equivalent."¹

In insisting upon the limits of commerce, Chalmers had definite objects in view. He gave to trade its own place in economic science. But he also carefully guarded against the undue importance which many attach to it. Statesmen and economists, failing to perceive its limitations, have given, he says, a false direction to "the policy of States and the theories of philosophers." They have ascribed to commerce "a mystic power," as if it were the creator of wealth. This has led to an eager haste to develop foreign trade, which again has often issued in cruel foreign wars.

Chalmers saw clearly the limits of commerce. Its products, he insisted, can only be bought according as the land yields sustenance. The land, however, under the best cultivation has, he held, its limits. The wealth which it produces therefore being limited, commerce has

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 63.

likewise its limits. It may multiply commodities, and these may be exported and exchanged for food, but even in this case it is still *land* that yields what man requires for sustenance. The limitations of commerce are therefore evident.

6. *Limits of Labour*.—From the limitations of land and commerce Chalmers inferred the limits of labour. Employment for the unemployed was already a question raised in Chalmers' day, though it was not so urgently pressed as it is at the present time. That work in many instances could be given to the unemployed is beyond question. But the acute question which unemployment raises must be examined in the light of economic science ; and the science teaches that all employment which fails to yield sustenance, directly or indirectly, is unremunerative toil and waste of energy.

To give, for instance, work to the unemployed in factories is not always profitable, for this often leads to a glut in the market, and affords no relief. Or, again, if the State or a municipality gives the unemployed work, it generally spells loss, unless the work assigned to them be in some way connected with the land. Road-making may be profitable, since it renders easier access to the land, but the land itself, directly or indirectly, must be the ultimate object of development. The unemployed sent to the land, if diligent, may produce wealth ; they may take out of it that which ministers to their needs ; but here again, Chalmers argued, since there are limits to the land, there must also be limits to employment upon it. Land, therefore, in the last resort, governs the limits of labour.

7. *Limits of Capital*.—As there are limits to employment, so, Chalmers held, there are limits to capital. There may be an excess of labourers—more people willing to work than the products of the land can support. There may also be an excess of capital, for capital, that is wealth in use,¹ may not always find profitable employment. A business enterprise may be over-capitalised, and to the extent that too much capital is put into it, to the same extent will profits be lessened, and risks of failure be incurred.

There is no other subject in economics upon which Chalmers writes with greater insight and illumination than that of capital, though, strange to say, economists of his day, when they could not refute his arguments, fell back upon the assertion that he entirely failed to understand what is meant by capital.² His writings, however, supply abundant evidence of his knowledge of the subject, and the corrections which he makes of false economic positions afford further proof of his accurate reading of economic terms.

Thus he corrects the misconception that capital is the measure of employment and also of remuneration of

¹ All economists attempt, if not a definition, at least a description, of capital, and speak of it as *fixed, circulating, individual, social, national, auxiliary, and consumptive*. Adam Smith describes capital as that part of a man's stock, accumulated wealth, "which he expects to afford him a revenue"; Ricardo, as "that part of the wealth of a country which is employed in production"; Stuart Mill, as "wealth devoted to reproductive employment"; Ruskin, as "material by which some derivative or secondary good is produced"; Cunningham, as "a fund of wealth from which a man expects to get an income"; and Bonar, as "a tool and as provision for the future." It is *circulating* or fixed according as it is being put to use or is reserved.

² See the writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1853, referred to on p. 331.

employment. *That* is a mistake which those make who attribute all prosperity to capital.

Again, Chalmers gives great prominence to an economic factor which many economists still overlook. In discussing the social problems of the day they acknowledge that the rate of wages at which workmen are paid is largely dependent upon their collective will. Whether these economists approve of trade unionism or not, they recognise its power. But, on the other hand, they are far from giving the prominence to a truth which Chalmers strongly and rightly emphasises when he says, that the rate of profit is largely dependent upon "the average standard of enjoyment among capitalists." Profits spent upon needless luxuries tend to reduce capital, and therefore also wages. But if capital be spent upon further business enterprises, so long as only one or two capitalists pursue this practice¹ the hope of large profits can be entertained. When, however, many capitalists adopt a policy of personal saving, and of the multiplication of their business enterprises, the market is very soon overstocked with goods and profits fall, and therefore also wages.

It is easy to see the lesson which these facts teach. They prove conclusively that even capital has its limits; that it is unwise to place too much confidence in mere capital; and that the ultimate source of a nation's prosperity is neither commerce nor capital, but land and the labour spent upon it.

Increasing numbers of reformers to-day maintain that

¹ The recent multiplication of the mills in Lancashire supplies an illustration of this economic truth.

the land question is the cause of the social question; but few of them see the obligations which they owe to the great ecclesiastic, who was among the first to deal with the deeper economic factors, the operations of which prove that the land question is all important. Chalmers contended that a solution of it is urgent, and that too in the interests of landlords as well as of those of the great mass of the people. This question still waits for solution. The danger is, that if there be too long delay in trying to solve it drastic schemes will be urged and carried through Parliament, which may do far more harm than good. A panic seldom produces lasting benefits.

IV.

Chalmers' description of trade cycles is extremely interesting, and is marked by clear insight into economic phenomena. He is still dealing with capital when he describes these trade cycles. His main contention is that an enormous accumulation of capital always issues in small profits, or in no profits at all. But he holds that the tendency of individuals and nations is to waste their capital either in extravagant living, or in unproductive schemes, or, on the part of nations, in wars. It is a common saying that riches seldom remain in the possession of a family beyond the third generation, unless they are invested in entailed land. What Chalmers states respecting the operations of capital incidentally offers an explanation of this experience, though it should be said that he has not this experience,

but a far more important object in view when describing trade cycles.

He points out that when capital is spent either in extravagant living, or on unproductive schemes, or on foreign wars, production is at once lessened, artisans are thrown out of employment, and high prices obtain to the great suffering of the labouring classes. But strange to say, their very suffering gives capitalists a new start. The high prices make for large profits, and capitalists again begin to store their wealth, or to put it into new commercial enterprises. Thus wealth increases again, not perhaps in the hands of the original owners, but in those of capitalists whose wealth is employed in production.

When capital increases it is again soon spent in over-capitalising commercial concerns which spell loss, or in extravagant and sumptuous living, which has always a demoralising effect. The same old process is therefore repeated, and an industrial cycle can be easily predicted. It makes no difference, Chalmers points out, whether the capital extravagantly spent belongs to individuals, or is borrowed by syndicates or by Government, unless that individuals, when markets are overstocked, lose their own capital, while syndicates squander other people's, and the Government impoverishes the nation, at least, for a time. The capital, under the present land and industrial systems, will grow again, but by a process which entails enormous and untold suffering.¹

¹ Within recent times an ingenious explanation of trade cycles has been offered. It does not, however, invalidate Chalmers' contentions. It rather calls special attention to the important part which land plays in industrial pursuits and social welfare. The explanation to which reference is made is

V.

When one reviews what Chalmers has written upon all these subjects it must be acknowledged that he gives wonderfully accurate readings of social phenomena, and that he treats all the questions which he discusses in the full light of economic science. But when all is said in praise of him which he deserves, it must still be remembered that his outlook was conditioned by the spirit and pursuits of the time in which he lived. He acutely related effects the one to the other, and also, in many instances, related them back to their original cause. He felt himself obliged, by his interpretation of economic factors from the Christian point of view, to read all events in the light of the Divine Purpose which, like a silver streak in a dark cloud, runs through human life.

It never, however, seems to have occurred to him that an industrial system might be adopted under which large fortunes could not be gathered and wasted on sumptuous living. The present system works out its own condemnation. Thousands upon thousands are profoundly dissatisfied with it. On economic grounds it can only be defended by those who discard the high ethics of the Christian Faith, and attempt to justify self-seeking. It is buttressed by a philosophy which is frankly utilitarian.

that offered by Professor Stanley Jevons, and quite recently restated by his son in a series of articles contributed to the *Contemporary Review*. Professor Jevons attributed trade cycles to the influence which the sun-spots have upon the earth's productiveness. He contended that the harvests of the world are largely determined by the recurrence of these sun-spots ; and that it is the scarcity or abundance of the earth's products which to a large extent determines trade cycles.—See *Contemporary Review*, June-August 1909.

Chalmers knew intimately the characteristics of the social life of his day. His writings supply proof of his knowledge of them ; but perhaps because his outlook was conditioned by the spirit of his times he did not see the possibility of an industrial system under which high prices and large profits would be impossible. High prices and large profits are, on his showing, the causes, to a great extent, of the sufferings of the poor and of the temptations of the rich to which they so easily succumb.

Much is gained when these things are seen plainly ; but they cannot be closely watched without the conviction growing in the minds of those who observe them carefully, that the present land and industrial systems are not final, but only stages, perhaps necessary stages, in social development ; and that the social use of all things socially required must, for reasons both economic and ethical, have a large and prominent place in future industrial development.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ECONOMICS : CHALMERS ON TRADE AND AGRICULTURE.

I.

THE true way to read Chalmers' economic writings is to peruse them always remembering that he was an enlightened and also a fearless critic of the economic principles affirmed and defended by the economists of his day. He did not hesitate to leave the beaten track. He did not, as already stated, perhaps see the ultimate issues of the economic principles for which he contended, and of the drastic remedial measures which he advocated. But if one reads his writings carefully, nothing else arrests one's attention in the perusal of them so much as his fine insight, and the frank, earnest manner in which he states his conclusions, irrespective of their ultimate tendencies. The man of insight, who is also honest, does not pursue a policy of calculation.

Chalmers was true to himself, and doctrinaire positions did not hamper him. That is the reason why he went so far, and also why he anticipates so many writers of the present time on social subjects. These writers popularise ideas which he was among the first to put into words and advocate. We shall see fine illustrations of this when in a moment we deal with his teach-

ings on foreign trade, and later when we examine his pronouncements respecting the taxation of land.

Chalmers was far in advance of his contemporaries in his interpretation of economics. The unity of human life, so often affirmed by the Christian Faith, was always present to his mind in all his contributions to economic science; and this enabled, one might almost say, this obliged him, to treat economics in the full light of that unity. This large conception of economics is to-day entertained and advocated by all enlightened economists. They are no longer satisfied with a mere local treatment of their science. They perceive the universal application of its principles; and they find in conceptions of the unity of human life the basis of a rational treatment of economic facts and phenomena. It is no small honour which is claimed for Chalmers when these things are said of him; but the claim is abundantly confirmed by his writings, economic and ethical.

How Chalmers reached his definite conclusions can be easily traced and stated. He saw clearly that the health, strength, and prosperity of the nation do not depend upon numbers, unless they be well fed and well housed; nor upon increase of employment, unless that employment be remunerative in the sense of producing things that make for life; nor upon increase of capital, unless it bring an adequate return; nor upon the benefits of a prosperous foreign trade, to which many in his time attributed, and large numbers still attribute, the nation's prosperity. He gave to all these economic factors their own place; but he went back to the land, and contended, as the most enlightened social reformers

now maintain, that all wealth comes from it. But, in addition, he looked for much from Christian education, and believed that the development of intelligence and the cultivation of virtue would alone guarantee the nation's prosperity.

II.

I have indicated the definite positions which he took up in relation to the limits of land, of commerce, and of capital. I must now advert to his important teachings respecting foreign trade. There are those who conclude that the wealth of a nation is estimated by its exports. These lay great stress upon commerce, and are all for its indefinite extension, since it multiplies commodities which may be exported.

Chalmers investigates this position, and closely examines the arguments which are assumed to support it, and also what these arguments carry with them. The power to export, he observes, is conditioned by the ability of the people who receive the exported goods to pay for them in money or by the importation of goods: "and this latter power is evidently limited by the ability to purchase on the part of our island consumers. It is therefore vain," he adds, "to talk of the indefinite demand for our commodities on the part of other nations."¹ Chalmers' economic formula is, that "the *terminus ad quem* of foreign trade is consumption at home."²

"Foreign trade," he affirms, "is not the creator of

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 206.

² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

any economic interest ; it is but the officiating minister of our enjoyments.”¹ If we forewent these enjoyments the energy directed towards the development of foreign trade would be turned towards home production. A juster estimate of trade on the part of statesmen would, he says, “greatly subserve the cause of peace and enlightened policy.” But other principles guide them. “The great majority of wars are mercantile wars, which never might have been, but for the illusions of those great names and imaginary interests that are associated with commerce.”

Chalmers faithfully applied his economic principles to the subject of the importation of food from abroad. He did not consider merely the luxuries, but also the food which is imported. He allows that there may be such a development of commerce—which always carries with it an increased number of workers and therefore an increased population to be fed—“as to put a country in the condition of having to import its agricultural produce.” But the export of manufactured goods may exceed the value of imports, which, it should be remembered, are always governed by the ability of the people at home to pay for them. This would speedily lead to a state of exchange unfavourable to exporters. When the state of exchange is against exporters they can only find relief by reducing the wages of the home workers. The reduction of the labourers’ wages entails privations ; and thus the social problem is accentuated.

This, however, is not all that follows ; for the surplus of goods sent abroad has the effect of making these goods

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 199.

cheaper in the foreign market, and this by a natural process soon puts a limit to home commercial enterprises, which cannot be remunerative when low foreign prices obtain.

But, in addition to these things, it is, Chalmers again and again points out, a dangerous state to which a country is reduced when it is dependent upon foreign countries for its food. If it were dependent upon them for luxuries only, no great harm would be done, for luxuries are superfluous ; they also tend to destroy manliness and to sap the strength of a nation.

It is, however, a different state of things which is created when a country is obliged to rely, or when it elects to rely, upon foreign supplies of food. It is then in imminent peril. Its commerce cannot be its defence. Trade, as such, avails it little, for a war may bring it to an end. Riches cannot save it. Tyre, Carthage, Venice, and the Hanseatic commercial circles of Germany, all fabulously rich, fell. "When deserted by their trade," says Chalmers, "the very foundation on which they rested gave way under them, they having no such foundation in any territory of their own. They, in fact, became as helpless as any inland town of home shops or manufactures when deserted by its country customers."

III.

Thus Chalmers raised a question which was acute in his time, and is still more urgent to-day. If at the beginning of last century food was only imported to the amount of five weeks' consumption in a year, and the

United Kingdom was then described as in great peril by the assumed power of Napoleon to block its ports, what must be its condition to-day when, it is computed, food is imported to the amount of eight months' consumption? A war, or other nations manufacturing the articles which are now supplied to them, may effectively cut off foreign trade. But war and competition carry with them additional evils which must also be borne. For if the country be obliged to go to war in order to maintain its foreign trade, and if merchants be forced to enter into competition with other nations, the waste and suffering entailed by war and commercial jealousies are far greater than any possible gains.

That stage is surely reached when reflection upon these things is imperative and a solution of them is an urgent necessity. The present industrial system, with its unbrotherly competition and its absolute dependence upon foreign trade, is not final. Chalmers already in his day had his solution of the problem which it created. He was all for going back to the land and developing its resources, and for taxing it according to Government's needs.

At the present time there are experts who, with good reason, hold that the land of the United Kingdom rightly and fully cultivated could support the whole population without importing any grain. Prince Kropotkin, in his *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*,¹ proves that if the soil of the United Kingdom were cultivated with the same intensity as that in the best farms in Lombardy

¹ Pp. 50-59.

and Flanders, food would be supplied for a population of 80,000,000. Mr W. Beach Thomas, whom *The Spectator*¹ describes as "a most careful observer whose judgment is trustworthy," has recently shown through the public press the possibility of enormously increasing the yield of our corn crops. He has given instances of land which is made to yield seventy or eighty bushels, instead of, as formerly, in the best years and the best soils, thirty or forty bushels to the acre. He maintains that, by attention to improved types of plant, improvement to an indefinite extent could be effected. Sir A. Cotton has shown from experiments which he himself made that scientific methods applied to agriculture would enormously increase the natural products of the earth. He contends that were these methods applied on an extensive scale they would carry with them "the return of the population from the towns to the land; the employment of every man of the present multitude of the unemployed; the investment of any amount of the vast capital lying idle; the relieving of the country from absolute dependence upon foreign, distant, and more or less inimical countries for necessary food for man and beast; the bringing back of landowners to residence among their people; the providing abundantly for all classes employed on the land—owners, tenants, and labourers; the great improvement of the quality of food; and the lowering of the cost of all the necessities of life."² The 33,000,000 acres of cultivable land in the United Kingdom, large parts of which are left untilld,

¹ *The Spectator*, 15th August 1908.

² *Vide Agriculture*, by Sir A. Cotton, p. 16.

could therefore, in the opinion of experts, be made to yield grain, vegetable, and fruit for the whole population.

Chalmers had few of the advantages, which are now enjoyed, of estimating the possibilities of the land, but he showed in a remarkable manner his fine insight into economic phenomena when he declared himself all for an agricultural, and not a mere commercial, basis as that on which a strong State can rest. "Our foundation," he wrote, "is our own territory. Though separated from our customers, we are not therefore separated from the maintenance of our population." The knowledge of this, he continues, "should serve to moderate our commercial ambition, and to quiet one of our great commercial jealousies."¹ But he also points out a possible danger ; for the growth of commerce, and especially of manufactures, leads to an enlargement of exports "beyond the possibility of their being paid for either by the luxuries or by the other goods not agricultural that come in return for them from other lands."

IV.

It is singularly instructive to observe that this economic problem which Chalmers discusses with thoroughness was one to which the schoolmen, notably St Thomas Aquinas, gave special attention when the claims of the land and of commerce were for the first time in Europe brought into conflict. Feugueray, in

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. pp. 236-7.

his *Essai sur les doctrines de saint Thomas d'Aquin*; Jourdain, in his *La philosophie de saint Thomas d'Aquin*; and Dr Ernest Nys, in his work already quoted, all show that Aquinas insisted upon the wisdom of a country relying upon its own resources.

Unconsciously perhaps, but none the less truly, Chalmers argued in favour of the position defined by the *Angelic Doctor* in the *Middle Ages*, who professed, says Dr Nys, "the Aristotelean ideal, that the body politic should rely as much as possible upon its own resources, and avoid total dependence upon neighbouring States."¹ Aquinas admitted the necessity of trade, but argued that it should be pursued in moderation.

To this ideal, first outlined by Aristotle, advocated by the Schoolmen, and commended by Chalmers, all social reformers of to-day are obliged to give attention.

Chalmers did not idolise commerce. He gave to manufacturing and trading enterprises their own places. He was, however, careful, as has been seen, to note their limitations, beyond which, if carried, they did more harm than good. He refused to exchange the field for the factory, and that both because, in his judgment, the exchange was unnecessary, and also because the undue importance assigned to commerce gave a false direction to economic agencies. He saw that it led to the crowding of the people into cities, where life is less pleasant, shorter, and assailed by temptations which few can resist.

There are those who admire the city life and speak in extravagant terms of praise respecting the strenuous-

¹ *History of Economics*, p. 142.

ness which it develops. Chalmers knew that life well ; but to him it only presented baffling social evils. He saw clearly that life in the crowded city was deprived of much of its charm. As one, therefore, reads his writings on city life, one soon feels the heavy burden which weighed on his mind ; and one also realises with him that education and intelligence have a hard task which they must attempt.

But fortunately Chalmers does far more than merely make one feel acutely the perplexing problems of city life. He has a solution to offer. Economists of the school of Ricardo may deride it ; but he is not thereby deterred from pressing its claims. Here, indeed, the great ecclesiastic of seventy years ago is like present-day social reformers. His words, spirit, and tone are almost identical with them, when he and they deal with a much-belauded commerce.

To take an illustration, Mr Robert Blatchford writes, in a book¹ which thousands have read with great interest : "The creed of the commercial school is that manufactures *pay* us better than agriculture ; so that by making goods for exports and buying food from abroad we are doing good business. The idea is, that if by making cloth, cutlery, and other goods we can buy more food than we can produce at home with the same amount of labour, it *pays* us to let the land go out of cultivation and make Britain 'the workshop of the world.'" Mr Blatchford rightly questions the good bargain which we are supposed to make ; but he does not write to-day more emphatically against the misguided zeal of the

¹ *Britain for the British*, p. 97.

advocates of commerce than did Chalmers seventy years ago.

The passion for extensive commercial enterprises is strong and persistent. It converts fair lands into black countries. Chimneys pouring out their dense smoke, furnaces belching out their lurid flames, men and women struggling under the harshest conditions for means of support, crowded houses, ill-fed and ill-clothed children are all largely the creations of a relentless mercantile system of which so many boast. There are many to-day who loudly lament the destruction of green fields, and the devastation everywhere witnessed in the black countries. They condemn the commercial spirit which accounts for the destruction and the devastation; but with all their fine æsthetic feeling they do not see so clearly as Chalmers saw how a remedy might be provided.

Chalmers was for "back to the land," not for merely æsthetic, but for the strongest economic reasons. He contended that the nation had set out on the wrong road to national prosperity, and that to rely upon foreign trade was to be obliged to multiply workshops, and create those conditions which make human life dull, burdensome, and man himself a mere machine—"a hand," as masters call him, and nothing higher or better. Foreign trade is, Chalmers argued, all too insecure a basis on which to rest the structure of society. It leads to the neglect of home agriculture, and gives a false conception of all that makes for life.

Chalmers, writing in a strong virile style, insisted that economic theories should be revised and the

science itself moralised. He affirmed that workmen should have opportunities of living a higher life. He also argued that education and intelligence must play an important part in social evolution ; and that, when these are exercised, less demand will be made for luxuries, and the people will be satisfied with a healthy and simple life. But he likewise contended that the social reformer must carry the economist with him, and that a great step forward is taken when the latter sees that a nation's trade does not require to go beyond, and is, indeed, never safe when it goes beyond, its agriculture.

V.

To many in Chalmers' day this teaching seemed Utopian and his economics the rankest heresy ; but forces of which they had no anticipation have made their influence felt, and that, too, all in favour of his teachings and of his readings of economic phenomena. A very large volume of enlightened public opinion is now all for education and the exercise of intelligence. In the field of economics it is now also seen that an enormously increased expenditure of brain and muscle is necessary in order to bring sufficient food from abroad for the supply of the wants of a multiplying population ; that the increasing cheapness of British goods in foreign markets limits the profits of exporters ; and that there is a constant tendency to equalisation in point of skill, and in the invention of new machinery in our own and in other lands.

Chalmers saw all these things clearly,¹ but he was counted by some short-sighted men a mere novice in economics, and dangerous too, whereas he was far more clear-sighted and far better informed than the majority of those who misjudged his powers and misunderstood his readings of economic history.

For, indeed, Chalmers did not take a narrow view of economic science. The words penned by Prince Kropotkin, one of the most enlightened writers on social questions, might have been written by Chalmers. The author of *Fields, Factories, and Workshops* says that economics, rightly understood, "is a study of the needs of men, and of the means for satisfying them with the least possible waste of energy."² Chalmers gave the greatest prominence to the human element, to men's needs, and to the conditions under which they could be best supplied.

He also related economics to ethics, and to ethics of the highest order. He gave to the science its own place, and pressed home all those invaluable lessons which a right reading of it always suggests. He did not count his time wasted in calling attention to the only conditions under which a constant supply of food can be provided. He handled material things, but it was always with moral motive and moral aim. He looked, therefore, "for our coming deliverance" to a moral change, and not to material things or economics alone. The place which economics held in his thoughts to the very end of his life shows that he could not, and did not, minimise its

¹ See *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 244.

² *Ibid.*, Preface, p. iv.

teachings; but when all this is said it still needs to be remembered that moral motive and aim, which may enlist the material in their service, are, in Chalmers' opinion, the chief factors which make for the enlargement, the strength, and the health of the nation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ECONOMICS—CHALMERS ON TAXATION OF LAND.

I.

CHALMERS did not lay undue emphasis upon external remedies. A prosperous and healthy state of society owes much, he frankly acknowledged, to these remedies. But social evils demand in a special sense moral solutions. He accordingly revived the moralised economics of the Middle Ages.

When social questions are discussed to-day, one often hears the complaint made that moral principles are left out of account. The complaint, as already noted, is not without justification. But it too often happens that those, who regret the absence of insistence on morals, do not recognise the very large and important part which material things play in the evolution of social life. They overlook the material, or give it an extremely subordinate position. Nothing save confusion can issue from such treatment of the complex problems of social life.

It cannot be pretended by anyone that Chalmers neglected the material. He strongly emphasised the moral; but again and again he discussed all that bears on *welfare*, and gave it a place not as high, but as distinctive, as that given by him to *well-being*.

Accordingly he at all times assigned a very large place

to such a subject as land taxation.¹ This was indeed a subject which early in his life fascinated him, and to the very last he insisted upon its importance.

If Chalmers' contentions respecting the obligations which landlords should fulfil be examined, it will be seen that his conclusions rest upon strongly based economic principles. His conclusions can be easily ascertained and stated.

II.

1. He declared emphatically for a territorial impost, because, as he contended, a tax on land does not lessen employment, and employment which yields sustenance is the chief object to be kept in view. If taxation of land be not recklessly imposed, he maintained that nothing but good follows.² The well-regulated imposition of taxes only changes the employer, who is now not the landlord but the State. It is not even, Chalmers remarks, a real loss to the landlord, for he only loses his luxuries, and exchanges them "for the objects of public expenditure, perhaps through the medium of fleets and armies for national independence; perhaps through the medium of schools and churches and colleges of justice for the protection of society from crime and violence, and for the increase of national virtue."³ It is thus "the substitution of a greater for a lesser benefit."

2. The extent to which Chalmers advocated the imposition of a land tax is clearly stated. If it be "levied alike upon all in like circumstances," there is

¹ See p. 16.

² *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 252.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

"scarcely any centage of taxation, however great, that would discourage cultivation."¹

3. Chalmers maintained that taxation of rent leads to the extension of husbandry. It stimulates cultivation. The landlords seek "by a more strenuous agriculture" to compensate themselves for the losses entailed by the taxation. "From negligence or pleasure" many estates, he said, "have not even the average cultivation bestowed upon them"; but taxation, he contended, obliges landlords to cultivate the soil to the utmost limit. "And when the question is put, How far might this taxation be carried without injury to the economic interests of the nation? it is obvious that it might be carried indefinitely near to that point at which, having surrendered all their luxuries, they satisfied themselves for a season with the necessaries of life."²

4. Much land has been improved, but Chalmers holds that for this the landlord has little or no credit, for "the progress of the improvement does not nowadays materially depend either on his capital or on his enterprise." The improvement is done by others, while he reaps the benefit of their labour.

Chalmers explains his contentions here at some length. There is, he says, always abundance of capital, and those who command it are always ready to put it into any operation or enterprise "capable of yielding a return, or replacing the outlay with a profit." Land is counted a safe investment, and though "capital has a tendency to overshoot itself by the application of it in larger quantities" than even the land can bear, enormous

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 252.

² *Ibid.*, p. 254.

sums are invested in land. The profit which it yields is not large, but land offers a special security.

Now, if the landlord enlists the services of the capitalist, he will "reap the benefits of a process in which he takes no active share. His rents flow in upon him without exertion on his part. He will," says Chalmers, "be glad to receive the whole, but should Government interpose with its taxation, he will not reject the part which remains to him. . . . A tax, then, of fifty per cent. on the net income of landlords would still leave them in possession of as zealous an interest as heretofore in the improvement of their property."¹

In advocating land taxation, Chalmers was able to cite the authority of Adam Smith; for already that eminent economist had taught that the rents of land are a species of revenue which the owner in many cases enjoys without any care or attention of his own; and that rents are a form of property which can "best bear to have a peculiar tax imposed upon them." He also maintained that this tax would not discourage any industry. "The real wealth and revenue of the great body of the people would," he says, "be the same after such a tax as before."²

I do not, for the moment, make any comment upon these drastic proposals. They astonished the economists of the day when they were first seriously propounded, as they still shock many who count land sacred to the interests of only a few, and who have not carefully examined its obligations.

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 256.

² See *Wealth of Nations*, Book V., chap. ii., where this argument is developed.

5. I now advert to an argument to which Chalmers attached great importance. He held that taxation ultimately falls upon land, and that, as it is really borne by the land, it would be wiser to tax the landlords directly. "If," he writes, "the real incidence of taxation be on land, what a world of misconception and malignant passion would be saved were taxes laid ostensibly, as well as virtually, upon the landlords. . . . We believe," he continues, "that though the whole of our public revenue were raised by means of a territorial impost, it would ultimately add nothing to the burden which now lies on the proprietors of the land; and that they, when fighting against such a commutation, are fighting in defence of imaginary interests."¹

III.

It would occupy too much of the space at my disposal even to give a brief statement of the arguments with which Chalmers supports the two positions: first, that all taxation should be on the land directly, and next, that it is the landlords who really pay the taxes. But it may be recalled that Chalmers followed the French school of economists, who maintained that taxes come out of the land, and that, while he accepted their conclusion, he justified it by arguments all his own. This particular question appealed to him strongly, and he defended his findings at great length.

His general contention, it may be stated, is that the

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 35.

landlord cannot recover what is taken from him in the form of taxes. The merchant can recoup himself by putting a higher price on his goods, and the labourer by insisting on higher wages. A tax on commodities or on labour raises the money-price of goods and labour. But such a tax has its limits; for if, in the case of merchants, it be excessive, commerce cannot be carried on; and if imposed on labour, since the labourer must have enough of food for sustenance, as otherwise work is impossible, the limit to which taxes on labour are possible soon becomes apparent.

The landlord, however, stands in a different position. He has no means of relief. His income is from the land; and if a tax is laid on the land, he is obliged to do with less income. He cannot put a higher price on the products of the soil. The price of its products varies; but "it is not the landlord who either raises the price of grain in the one case, or lets it down in the other. He is the mere recipient of a surplus, the amount of which is determined by causes extrinsic to himself and independent of himself."¹ All that the landlord can do is to try to cultivate the soil more intensely, and to take out of it a larger amount of sustenance. That is his only relief. Meanwhile he is obliged to pay a higher price for the goods which he uses, for the labour which he employs, and at the same time his rent is lessened by "the whole addition which taxation lays on the expense of husbandry."²

As might be surmised, Chalmers was assailed on account of his assumed heretical teachings. One of

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 271.

² *Ibid.*, p. 290.

the ablest of his critics was the writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* to whom reference has been made. He maintained that Chalmers, when discussing the price of corn, only took into his reckoning the quantity brought into the market and the number of consumers. The supply of those commodities, he argued, against which corn exchanges, was overlooked. "This little oversight," he says, "appears to us the origin of the whole paradox." Briefly stated, the critic's argument is : That corn is a mercantile commodity, and that Chalmers did not see that the amount of taxation which is imposed by Government can be, and indeed always is, added to the price of corn, as to other goods.

Chalmers, it need scarcely be said, did not deny that corn is a marketable article. He knew that it rose and fell in price, not only because there are other commodities that vary in price and for which it exchanges, but chiefly because it is limited in amount and is ever in urgent demand. He maintained, however, that "when a tax is laid upon net rent, the landed proprietor can claim no indemnification for it from the other classes of society"; for "it is not the rent of land which causes the high price of agricultural produce"; it is "the high price of agricultural produce, brought on by other influences," which "is the cause of rent."¹

In discussing this question, which the imposition of taxes raises, Chalmers, it should be noted, has nothing of the seeker of popular applause about him. He deals

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 270.

with a purely economic problem. He is far in advance of his contemporaries, and he knows that he may expect blame rather than applause. But none the less earnestly does he state his contentions and offer arguments in favour of them.

The question which he discussed is perhaps seen in clearer perspective to-day than was possible to him; but to him belongs the distinction of boldly raising an issue upon which he throws light both from economic history and from economic science. Whether his contentions be wholly approved of or not, this at least is certain, that there is much in his economic writings which may legitimately be taken and used by those who demand a settlement of the land question.

There are many to-day who insist that the land should be treated as national property. They point to the origin of landlordism, and to the hardships which the monopoly of land invariably carries with it. They contend that the time has come when it should, under a proper system of compensation, revert to the people. Chalmers was all for the taxation of land. Those who regard land as national property do not make larger claims upon the land or demand heavier land taxation than he made.

IV.

This question still waits for solution, and it is the duty of all who aim at social betterment to give it an impartial investigation. It may, however, here be said

that when statesmen set themselves to the task of rectifying taxation, they will be obliged not only to tax land, but also, as already seen,¹ all businesses and professions which are protected by legal privileges. Chalmers in his day emphasised the taxation of land; but, as almost all economists now perceive, a combination of agriculture and commerce is necessary to material prosperity, and a juster estimate of the sources of revenue must be found in the taxation of the rich trader as well as the landlord.

But while this question waits for solution, what has just been stated must not be taken as implying that we should forget Chalmers' teachings respecting land taxation. Landlords, he held, enjoy many advantages, and should therefore bear public burdens. Much land has been brought into cultivation by the smaller farmers. Sites have greatly increased in value. Minerals have been enormously developed, and landlords gather in large royalties for which they render no service. Even industry has opened up for them many new sources of gain. If they frankly took upon themselves the burden which they should bear, they themselves would benefit greatly by getting cheaper food and larger rents, while the lot of the toilers would be improved. Chalmers laid much stress upon this last argument.

Many accept Chalmers' conclusions, whether they reach them by his process of reasoning or not. Thus, to cite not an extreme instance, Mr Harold Spender, after an elaborate review of the possible sources from which Government may obtain all the money that is

¹ See pp. 16 and 107.

necessary for Government obligations and social improvements, says that "a tax on land may become one of the richest sources of our revenue."¹

The land at the present time bears nothing of the taxation which might legitimately be imposed upon it. This is at once apparent if the entire revenue of the United Kingdom, and the contribution which the land makes to it, be considered. The revenue for 1908 amounted to £156,537,690; but the land tax yielded only £730,000. The new land tax under the Budget of 1909 produced an extra half million; but the whole land tax is relatively small when the total rent from land is kept in view. For, on the lowest calculation, the sum paid in the form of rent amounts to the startling total of £216,000,000. Some make it £290,000,000. If fundholders be reckoned, as Chalmers maintained they should be counted co-proprietors of the land,² then the sum paid to them, when added to the above total, makes the net rent simply enormous. This rent, drawn from the land, should surely, and with good reason, be made to bear a large share of public burdens. For this Chalmers contended on grounds which have been briefly described; and for this there is a passionate demand being made at the present time. No wise Government can neglect the demand with impunity.

I have dwelt at some length upon Chalmers' conclusions respecting the taxation of land, because this is one of the subjects of the day which engross

¹ See *Contemporary Review*, Aug. 1908.

² *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 291.

public attention. It is also sure to command even greater attention in the near future. To ascertain therefore what conclusions the great ecclesiastic and social reformer reached after careful investigation is of great practical interest and use.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DR CHALMERS' ECONOMIC PRONOUNCEMENTS.

I.

I CONCLUDE my examination of Chalmers' economic writings by stating briefly the additional pronouncements which he made.

1. He had no sympathy with those who declaimed against a large national expenditure which is rendered necessary by social improvements; for he argued that such an expenditure makes for the greater comfort of the people and the best interests of the nation. All public institutions can thereby be adequately supported. The only thing which he desiderated was, that "taxes should be rightly laid, and the produce of them rightly expended."¹ He thus puts in his own way the contention which many at the present time urge, when they maintain that everything which the people socially need should be provided by taxation.

In advocating a generous expenditure Chalmers anticipated many social reformers of to-day, who hold that the money which is necessary for the support of all public institutions should come, not as an act of charity on the part of millionaires, but from taxation.

"So far," he writes, "from taxation having been carried to its extreme limit, we believe that it was never at a greater distance from the limit than at this moment ;

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 305.

and to substantiate the position, we make our confident appeal to those families in the country who are elevated above the condition of labourers, to the increased profusion of their tables, and the increased magnitude of their houses, and furniture, and equipage.”¹

“We cannot,” he wrote at an earlier period, “regard taxes so much as a burden upon the people, or the remission of taxes so much in the light of a deliverance to the people.”² The only persons who benefit by the remission are the rich. “They have the whole advantage of the cheapness”; and the result is, not that the poor live in greater comfort, but that the wealthy “luxuriate in greater splendour and effeminacy.”³

2. Chalmers strenuously opposed national loans. He held that they carry with them higher prices which the working classes have to pay. They also impose burdens which remain for many generations. They are thus repaid twice—once in these higher prices, and again in taxation which extends over a long period of years. If war necessitated a large expenditure of money, the payment, Chalmers maintained, should be made by a sufficient and direct tax. This, he argued, would do more to prevent wars than anything else, since those who had to pay the tax would hesitate to sanction war.

But he also added a strong economic argument against loans; for “the whole sum,” he held, “borrowed for any year, though primarily and ostensibly raised from the money-holders, is, in fact, raised from the public, and raised too *within one year*”⁴ in the higher

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 125.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 311.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 75.

prices paid for all commodities. This could, he contended, be done as easily by higher taxes. This argument which Chalmers has developed at length¹ has not yet received much attention; but here, as in many other places, he is before his time; and it must be added that he anticipates a condition of things which many to-day regard as not only desirable, but also possible.

3. He was all for the reform of the country's fiscal system, but he held that this should be effected slowly. He advocated a general income tax, "although it did include the mercantile along with the landed classes."² This, however, was only to be temporary; and it was to be "exclusively associated with the enjoyments and expenditure of the wealthy."

Ultimately this income tax was to give way to an extensive system of land taxation. But until the whole taxation came from the land, all taxes, national and local, were to be commuted into this income tax; and "in every case of great and expensive emergency" it might "be carried to such an extent as to supersede loans."³

In view of these statements it is not difficult to perceive how Chalmers advocated at an early period financial reforms to which, many now believe, the Government must give effect.

4. Chalmers supported trades unions,⁴ but he insisted upon freedom for those who refused to join them.

5. He also declared for Catholic Emancipation and the abolition of Corporation tests.

6. He was in favour of opening our ports to foreign

¹ See *Political Economy*, vol. ii. pp. 71-81. ² *Ibid.*, p. 123. ³ *Ibid.*, i. 306.

⁴ See pp. 70-1. *Political Economy*, ii. p. 99.

grain free of duty ;¹ but, respecting a general system of free trade, he was "not of the number of those who rate very high the economic advantages" of such a system.² For the sake of "certain attendant moral benefits," however, he described *free trade* as "one of the best and wisest achievements of an enlightened national policy." "It cancels a thousand heart-burnings at home," and "the system is not more favourable to domestic than to foreign tranquillity."³

7. He was against the abolition of the law of primogeniture. He threw gentle ridicule on those who were in favour of "an equal distribution of the land." It was, in his view, far less important "that property should be equalised than that property should, if possible, be placed to a greater extent than now in the state of having a public service and obligation attached to it, and that consequently less of it should be left in the state of simple and unconditional ownership."⁴ Chalmers was all for the aristocracy and this law which upheld their power ; but he greatly modified his opinions when, after the Disruption, they refused sites to the Free Church and abused their power.

8. Emigration was, in his opinion, only a "temporary expedient" to pressure on the land and to the relief of pauperism ;⁵ and Home Colonies were useless unless they yielded sustenance to the labourers in them.⁶ We have already seen that Chalmers could not have foretold the possibilities of enlightened and intensive cultivation of neglected land.

¹ *Political Economy*, ii. p. 244 and i. p. 103.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 99.

³ *Ibid.*, i. p. 100.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. p. 356.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. p. 389.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii. p. 61.

9. Strange to say, though he was much in sympathy with all aspirations after freedom, Chalmers objected to the Reform Bill of 1832. He feared that it would lead to further demands being made—a surmise amply justified, though the fears which he entertained are shared by few to-day, at least openly. He was powerfully influenced, it must always be remembered, by his early political training and his environment. He was indeed slow to break with political traditions. But it should also be recalled that this led him into strange situations. He objected to the Reform Bill, which, to a very limited extent, gave the right to the people of selecting their legislators; but the principle to which he thus objected was identical with that for which he rightly contended on public platforms and in the Church Courts, when he argued with great power that the people should have the liberty of choosing their own ministers of religion.

But, while stating frankly his apparent inconsistency, due, perhaps, to the influence of his early training, justice must be done to Chalmers by saying that he did not regard the Reform Bill with favour, because he thought that it might create expectations which would not be realised; and, further, because many in his day seemed to hold the view that political measures were alone necessary to the removal of social evils.

He was all for the eradication of these evils by means of moral agencies, or by means of economics, inspired by moral motive. He trusted little to political art. This in part explains his opposition to the Reform Bill; and it was also the same distrust of the State and of State interference which induced him to take up his well-

known position in relation to the Poor Laws. This, indeed, requires to be kept steadily in view, otherwise it is extremely difficult to offer a reasonable explanation of his attitude towards legislative action.

10. Apart from his economic writings respecting land and labour, capital and commerce, the two chief subjects to which he gave, as a student and exponent of social life, the greatest attention were those of the Poor Laws and Education. These may be conveniently treated together, for the careful student of his writings will discover the same principle again and again asserting itself whenever Chalmers deals with the remedies for poverty and with education.

Mr N. Masterman, in the volume to which reference has already been made,¹ gives a full statement, mainly in Chalmers' own words, of all that the great ecclesiastic said and taught respecting the Poor Laws, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to attempt a restatement.

Respecting Chalmers' treatment of pauperism, it should be said that he had to deal with a condition of things when the Poor Law was administered in England as a supplement to ill-paid labourers not necessarily aged or incapacitated for work, and that something of the same type of relief was advocated for Scotland. He opposed the English system, and it is on all sides recognised that his arguments against its continuance were powerful factors which made for a change in the English system. When, in 1844, the Poor Law for Scotland was passed by Parliament, many objectionable features in the old English system were absent from it; but still Chalmers

¹ "Chalmers on Charity."

greatly lamented the passing of this law, even though it only sanctioned grudgingly relief to the very destitute.

He objected to the Poor Law because, in his judgment, it encouraged deception and destroyed the spirit of independence. It struck a fatal blow, he held, at the habits and economics of the people, at the kindness of relatives, at the sympathy of the rich, and also of the poor for one another.¹ It confounded, he held, humanity with justice. "Justice should be enforced by law, but compassion ought to have been left free."²

Chalmers distinguishes between poverty and pauperism. He even lends countenance to the misreading of our Lord's words, *the poor always ye have with you*,³ and holds that we *shall* always have the poor with us; and any one is poor, "the earl who cannot afford a carriage,"⁴ who is obliged to live "in a style of comfort below that of the class of society to which he belongs." "The aged female householder who is both destitute and diseased" belongs to the same category as the poor earl! These, he says, we are always to have with us; and poverty belongs to a state of things which cannot be eradicated.

But pauperism, in Chalmers' view, is a quite different thing. Legal provision for the poor turns the recipients of it into paupers; and pauperism is "an artificial excrescence,"⁵ the total extinction of which is "both desirable and practicable."

¹ *Christian Polity of a Nation*, vol. i. pp. 401-6.

² *Ibid.*, Preface, p. viii.

³ See pp. 43-4, where the meaning of this passage is examined.

⁴ *Christian Polity of a Nation*, vol. i. p. 396.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Preface, p. xii.

How is this to be effected? Chalmers answers by saying that relief to the needy may come from benevolence, or from those who have grown rich by the service which the needy once rendered to them, or from the State. Chalmers decides for the first of these methods of relief. It is, in his judgment, the only effective and safe method; and when benevolence is intelligently organised, pauperism will be extinguished, or, at least, will be enormously lessened. Benevolence, he holds, in nowise destroys the spirit of independence.

II.

One, who has studied Chalmers' economic writings, and admires his fine insight and wonderful anticipations of present-day solutions of social evils, hesitates to offer adverse comments on his pronouncements; but where experience throws light on the problems which Chalmers attempted to elucidate, one must take advantage of that light, and try, irrespective of any authority, to ascertain what solution of these problems is possible. For these legitimate reasons attention is here directed to Chalmers' utterances on poverty, and to the reflections which occur to one in examining them.

The question which Chalmers discusses is one, first, of the *claims* of the needy for relief, and, secondly, of the *agencies* by means of which relief can be best given, and, thirdly, of the *terms* which may be used when speaking of poverty and its relief.

(a) Chalmers examines the *claims* of the poor, and concludes that they should be supplied with *bread*, but

not on the grounds of justice, for justice must not be confounded with benevolence. The needy cannot demand support. The "must" requires to be eliminated when claims on their behalf are urged.

(b) Chalmers would meet all these claims by enlightened and well-organised charity. He refuses, therefore, to admit any obligation beyond what charity dictates; for he writes, "The principle that each man, simply because he exists, holds a right on other men or on society for existence is a thing not to be regulated but destroyed."¹

Now, here experience throws its light upon the question at issue; and it makes these things quite plain—first, that charity is inadequate to meet the claims of all the needy, and, secondly, that it is not more discriminatively administered by individuals or societies than it can be by the State. All the enlightenment and organisation possible to individuals and to societies are also possible to the State. That the State has still much to learn in the administration of its contributions to the relief of the needy is admitted; but according as the responsibility which belongs to it is felt, so will statesmen take pains to see that money given by the State is wisely distributed. That mistakes have been made by Government in the discharge of its duty is admitted; but they have also been made by individuals; and if the one can learn from experience so also can the other.

As to the obligation which rests upon the State to make provision for the aged, it is now recognised that all who have served the State are entitled to this provision.

¹ *Political Economy*, Preface, p. ix.

Hitherto only officers of the State have been pensioned, and on the ground that they have rendered service. But the State is the whole people ; and all, therefore, who need it deserve support at the end of the day of their service. Old-age pensions rest not on charity, but on work done to the community. They cannot be otherwise easily justified.

(c) The question at issue is one largely of terms, that is, whether, when the State gives relief, the aid should be described by one word, or whether, when the individual or a society relieves distress, another term should be employed to designate the help given. Chalmers distinguished between poverty and pauperism ; but all terms should be discarded which carry with them ideas of undesert, so long associated with relief of the needy, and emphasis should be laid upon pensions earned by all who in any way, even the humblest, have served the State. The aged poor who have made their contribution, however small, to the prosperity and strength of the State have their legitimate claims as well as those who have rendered greater service ; and since the latter are liberally pensioned, it is difficult to resist the contention that State provision should also be made for the aged poor. That the evils, possibly attendant upon the administration of relief and respecting which Chalmers uttered many wise sayings, should be carefully guarded against is beyond controversy ; but already in the Australian Colonies an object-lesson is given of wise administration ; and if in these Colonies the aged poor are cared for, and that, too, without loss of dignity, it must be possible to administer State aid within the

United Kingdom to the needy without destroying their sense of independence.

But after all, and even when relief of the needy is thus given, the fringe of the question of poverty is only touched. The radical solution lies in the change of the present land and industrial systems ; and Chalmers comes nearer to the truth than perhaps he himself realised when he declared for the adequate taxation of land and the right regulation of commerce.

III.

When Chalmers deals with education he displays the same distrust of State interference as he exhibits in his treatment of poverty. Three courses were open to the educationists of his day. They might decide for free schools in all branches of education, or for partially endowed schools, or for schools without endowment and entirely dependent upon fees.¹

All these methods were keenly canvassed seventy years ago. Objection was taken to free schools on the ground that what is free is seldom valued ;² and next, that under a free system attendance would be irregular. Chalmers maintained that there would be "a careless estimate" of the value of education, and "carelessness on the part of the teacher as well as a remiss and partial attendance of the taught."³

Now, here again experience throws its light, and this

¹ See *Tracts and Essays*, vol. xii. of *Collected Writings*, pp. 194 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 196.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

time upon the question of education. Few educationists in Chalmers' day insisted that free education must also be compulsory, and that the placing of the cost of education on the rates would oblige parents to take an interest in that for which they are taxed. Recent experience shows that the fears which were entertained by many seventy years ago as to free education have been without foundation; for, there are now more children at school, and these attend more regularly, too, than at any preceding time.

There are therefore few to-day who advocate the leaving of education for support to fees alone. That system was long tried in England, and it was stamped with failure. In Scotland it has always been different: for, from the Reformation and onwards there have always been the parish schools with their partial endowments.

But the old parish system, though it had many keen advocates, was altogether inadequate. The support of the teachers was meagre. Schools were staffed at a minimum; and while there were in many parishes excellent teachers who successfully prepared the clever boys for the University, even these teachers did not take the majority of the pupils beyond the three R's. Now, under the free system of primary education which is given in all State-aided schools, and of secondary education which is given in many State-aided schools, girls as well as boys are sent with high educational attainments from these secondary schools to the University.

But if Chalmers allowed his strongly-held views respecting State interference to bias his judgment as to how education should be provided, there is no sign of

misapprehension when he deals with the content of education. He quotes with approbation Burke's *dictum* that "*Education is the cheap defence of nations*,"¹ and he again and again insists that the thorough moral and religious education of all children is the first and greatest object of national policy. He had no faith in education "dissevered from the lessons of Christian piety,"² for the high road "to a stable sufficiency and comfort among the people is through the medium of their character."

I have had many occasions for pointing out how often Chalmers anticipated modern movements and modern questions. Here I must again record his wonderfully clear anticipation of the necessity of teaching economics in the higher classes of the day schools. He has, as has already been pointed out,³ an illuminating essay on this subject; and not one of those who have advocated such teaching has stated the case more clearly than he has done. I repeat, therefore, again that it will repay anyone who is interested in the question of good citizenship to read Chalmers' Essay and examine the arguments which he states in support of the contention that economics can be safely and advantageously taught in the higher classes of the day schools.

It is not necessary to cite passages from Chalmers' writings in proof of the high value which he set upon instruction in morals and manners. He had a too clear perception of all that makes for the formation of character to neglect such instruction; and therefore references to

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 33.

² *Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 19.

³ See pp. 67-68.

moral and religious instruction are found almost on every page of his writings.

He carried indeed, with fervour, the great truths of the Christian Faith into all his studies; and he rendered a service of the first order when he made his splendid efforts to moralise social life. He knew no solution of the perplexing problems of social life which does not give the greatest prominence to the legitimate influence of Christian ethics, and he looked only for the transformation of society when to secular instruction, and noble endeavours to rectify political and social abuses, there are added religious instruction and moral efforts in all departments of life—in the home, in the factory, in the market, and in the exchange—with a view to the reign and rule of love and righteousness, and therefore with a view to the realisation of the kingdom of God.

IV.

I have endeavoured to describe the Social Ideal; and to indicate some of the more prominent agencies which must be used in the task of trying to realise it. I have also tried to show how this Ideal inspires with zeal all who have a vision of it, and how earnestly those who are thus inspired labour for the well-being of their neighbours and the betterment of all social relationship. I may fittingly conclude by quoting a magnificent pronouncement by Chalmers. He, like all great seers, had his vision of the Social Ideal. "The arts and inventions of machinery have," he writes, "enlarged and will continue to enlarge indefinitely the

production of wealth ; but it is by a mental and moral regimen alone that we shall secure the right distribution of it . . . what all economists admit to be of some importance, we pronounce to be of supreme importance : that moral worth which they regard as but helpful, we regard as indispensable to the economic well-being of the people” ; of whom he says that “ the conditions to which they might hopefully aspire—and it is the part of every honest and enlightened philanthropist to help them forward to it—is that of less work and higher wages : and this not only that they might participate more largely in the physical enjoyments of life, but that, in exemption from oppressive toil, and with the command of dignified leisure, there might be full opportunity and scope for the development of their nobler faculties in the prosecution of all the higher objects of a rational and immortal existence. There is,” he continues, “ but one practicable opening to such an enlargement for the working classes, and which can only be made good by the strength of their moral determination—when, after the spectacle of cheerful and well-paid industry has been fully realised, we shall at length behold their emancipation from their sore bondage, and their brethren of our common nature transformed into lettered, and humanised, and companionable men.” ¹

How this is to be attained is, he says, “ not by the working of one mighty organisation for the achievement of great things, but by the accumulation of small things, not by men whose task it is to contemplate what is splendid in philanthropy, but by men whose practical

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. ii. pp. 220-1.

talent it is to do what is substantial in philanthropy ; not by men who eye with imaginative transport the broad and boundless expanse of humanity, but by men who can work in drudgery and in detail at the separate portions of it. The glory of establishing in our world that universal reign of truth and righteousness which is coming will not be the glory of any one man, but it will be the glory of Him who sitteth above and plieth His many millions of instruments for the bringing about of this magnificent result." ¹

¹ *Political Economy*, vol. ii. pp. 222-3.

INDEX

A

- Acland, A. H. D., and *citizenship* in Continuation Classes, 68.
 Agricola, Georg, and economic science, 297.
 Agriculture, the nation's true basis, 308, 339.
 Agur's prayer, 83.
 Aids to social betterment, 87 *et seq.*
 Alexander the Great, his gifts of intellectual and moral treasures to the West, 246.
 Anthropology and social evolution, 286.
 Antoninus, St, an eminent Italian economist, 297.
 Aquinas, Thomas, on national resources, 336.
 Aristotle and economics, 297.
 — and his theory of the universe, 246.
 — on justice, 208.
 Ascham, Roger, and educational progress, 212.
 Aurelius, Marcus, his teachings and the martyrdom of Polycarp and Irenæus, 246.

B

- Babylonians and economics, 297.
 Bacon, Lord, and educational progress, 212.
 Bain, Prof. Alex., the place which he gave to *feeling* in philosophy, 165, 255.
 Belluga, Pedro, 298.

- Bentham, Jeremy, his theory of utility, 165, 255.
 — quoted by Stuart Mill, 225.
 Blaikie, Prof., biographer of Chalmers, 38.
 Blanc, Louis, and a scientific treatment of society, 65.
 Blatchford, Mr R., on commerce, 337.
 Bonar, Dr James, on the origin of Malthus' essay, 28.
 Booth, Mr Charles, a scientific exponent of social life, 65.
 Bosanque, Mrs, on the family life, 287.
 Boxhorn, Marcus Zuerius, 298.
 Bradley, Dr, on *will*, and revolt against Hegel, 165.
 Brotherhood, a social agency, 127.
 — a synthesis of agencies in terms of, 147 *et seq.*
 — the highest agency, 228 *et seq.*
 — history's teachings respecting, 239 *et seq.*
 Burke, Edmund, and national distress, 28.
 Burns on liberty, 148.
 Butler and the emphasis he laid on moral sentiments, 255.

C

- Caird, Prof. Edward, his interpretation of Kant, 173.
 Carlyle, Thomas, his protest against mere logic, 237.
 Catholic emancipation, 355.

- Chalmers, Dr, among the first clergymen to recognise the claims of economics, 299.
- and a graduated income-tax, 14.
 - and commercial enterprise, 21, 22
 - and his critics, 41.
 - and Malthus' essay on population, 29 *et seq.*
 - and methodised charity, 41, 42.
 - and taxation of land, 16, 215.
 - and the French *Encyclopédistes*, 305.
 - and trades unions, 71.
 - ecclesiastic and theologian, 34 *et seq.*
 - his chief economic formula, 319-320.
 - his chief economic thesis, 305.
 - his definition of luxury, 16.
 - his definition of wealth, 306.
 - his eminence as an economist, 34 *et seq.*
 - his equipment for economic work, 10 *et seq.*
 - his independent economic investigations, 300.
 - his interest in economic studies, 1 *et seq.*, 300.
 - his method of investigation described, 313.
 - his ministerial career, 12 *et seq.*
 - his objection to elaborate economic systems, 301.
 - his outlook conditioned by the spirit of his times, 226-7.
 - his parochial social work, 17, 18, 44.
 - his personal piety, 41.
 - his social work in Glasgow, 17 *et seq.*
 - his theory of wealth explained, 307.
 - his treatment of poverty examined, 360-3.
 - his treatment of the land question, 308-9, 325, 329.
 - his treatment of the social question of his day, 310-2.
- Chalmers, Dr, how to read his economic writings, 328.
- induced to study economics, 23 *et seq.*
 - on capital and its limitations, 322-3.
 - on exports, dangers of, 335.
 - on foreign trade, 330-2.
 - on government subsidies, 15.
 - on limits of commerce, 320; of labour, 321; of land, 317-9.
 - on limits of taxation, 353-4.
 - on relation between economics and ethics, 5, 6.
 - on rent, 314-7.
 - on the Poor Laws, 359-60.
 - on trade cycles, 224-5.
 - on well-paid industry, 302.
 - the place he assigned to economic factors, 329.
- Character, right estimate of 81, 142-3, 317.
- Charity methodised, 41 *et seq.*
- well-organised, is Dr Chalmers' remedy for poverty, 361.
- Christianity and social affairs, 244 *et seq.*
- enforces social service, 55.
 - its demands, 249.
- Church, the, and social relationships, 92 *et seq.*
- and social work, 17.
- Churchmen and economic science, 5, 11.
- Cicero on justice, 209.
- City life, dangers of, 336-7.
- Cobbett, William, 4.
- Collectivism, arguments on behalf of, 140.
- its claims, 143.
 - its contest with individualism, 187 *et seq.*
 - its rapid growth, 189.
 - unorganised, tried, 188.
- Collings, Jesse, Mr, and land reform, 242.
- Comte, Auguste, a scientific exponent of social life, 65.

Comenius and education, for gentlemen only, 212.
 Commerce affected by ethics, 277-9.
 — and Christian ethics, 248.
 Commercial enterprise, passion for, 337.
 — Dr Chalmers on, 20-2.
 Competition, evils of, 68.
 Condition, right estimate of, 81 *et seq.*, 142-3, 317.
 Conditions, the present, not final, 284.
 Condorcet, Marquis de, and his teachings, 23, 24, 299.
 Cotton, Sir A., 14.
 — on intensive cultivation of land, 334.
 Cudworth, and the intellectual influence in moral theories, 255.
 — prepared the way for the Scottish school of moralists, 275.
 Cultivation of land, intensive, necessary, 333.
 Cumberland, on the intellectual element, 255.

D

D'Alembert, his economic teachings, 297.
 Democracy, direct, 220.
 — representative, 220.
 Diderot's revolt against the mercantile system, 297.
 Dodds, Rev. James, biographer of Chalmers, 37.
 Dynamic, the social, 6, 7.

E

Economic science, Hellenic influence on, 297
 — science, high place assigned to it, 296.

2 A*

Economic science, separated from ethics, explains many socialistic failures, 285.
 Economics alone cannot transform society, 59, 60-1, 296, 340.
 — brief review of its long history, 296-9.
 — instruction in day-schools, 47, 67-8, 120, 365.
 — reacts upon character, 295.
 — relation of ethics to, 3, 5, 46, 142.
 Education, cost of, 186.
 — Dr Chalmers' distrust of the State in relation to, 363-4.
 — parish system, 364.
 Elberfeld system, the, 17.
 — Dr Chalmers originator of, 44.
 Emigration, a temporary expedient, 356.
 Employers, how many act, 72, 337.
 Engels, Friedrich, a scientific exponent of social life, 65.
 Equality, a social agency, 127, 147, 204 *et seq.*
 — claims and sphere of, 217 *et seq.*
 — of opportunity, 212.
 — political, 220 *et seq.*
 — social, 222 *et seq.*

Eros, The Unknown, a protest against physical science, 237.
Essay on Population, Malthus', 27-32.
 Ethics and social reconstruction, 278 *et seq.*
 Expenditure for social improvements defended by Dr Chalmers, 352.

F

Factory Acts, 268.
 Family, the, one of the most ancient institutions, 287.
 Fechner, Prof., and the new psychology, 254.
 Feeding of school children, 213.

Feeling, 162 *et seq.*, 254 *et seq.*

Ferguson, Prof. Adam, his essay
on society, 63.

— on justice, 209.

Fichte, on the moral ideal, 276.

Field, the, *versus* the factory,
336.

Fiscal reform, Dr Chalmers' in-
terest in, 14.

Foundations of society, examined
to-day with new test, 286.

Fourier, J. B. J., and scientific
treatment of society, 65.

Fox, Charles James, and national
distress, 28.

Fraser, Dr Donald, biographer of
Chalmers, 37.

Free trade, Dr Chalmers in favour
of, 354.

French Revolution, 24-7, 219.

G

Gambling and the limits of in-
dividual liberty, 175.

Godwin, William, his life work, 3,
4.

— his teachings, 23-6, 299.

Gomme, George Laurence, and the
village community, 242.

Government, obligations of, 185.

— representative, 183.

Governmental subsidies condemned
by Dr Chalmers, 15.

Governments, authority of, 184.

— limits of, 184.

— origin of, 183 *et seq.*

Graswinckel, Dirk, 298.

Grotius, his wide human interests,
298.

Growth of intellectual and moral
ideas, 245-6.

Guilds, the, a stage in social evolu-
tion, 283.

— collectivist in character, 188.

Guizot, M., his view of economic
science, 7.

H

Hanna, Dr, on Dr Chalmers'
economic work, 5, 38.

Hebrew prophets and brotherhood,
245.

Hedonism, excluded from the
theory of utility, 255.

Hegel and British Moralists, 275.

— Mr Bradley's revolt against, 165.

Heydt, D. von der, and the Elber-
feld system, 45.

Hobbes and his insistence upon
feeling, 255.

— and the egoistic element in
moral theories, 179.

— on justice, 209.

Hobhouse, Prof., and the scien-
tific explanation of society,
65.

— on content of sociology, 8, 9.

Humanism, its claims, 291-3.

Humarabi, code of, 245.

Hume, David, on justice, 209.

Hutcheson, Francis, and the moral
sentiments, 255.

— prepared the way for Adam
Smith, 298.

Huxley, T. H., and his contro-
versies with Spencer, 173.

— his words quoted by Spencer,
202.

I

Idealism, and its basis of moral
theories, 256.

— and personality, 293.

— explains social changes, 284.

— its conclusions and how these
tell on ethics and social re-
construction, 294.

— its value, 276, 280, 282.

Income-tax, Dr Chalmers on a
graduated, 14.

Individualism and collectivism,
187 *et seq.*

Individualism and commerce, 190-1.
 — and government interference, 265.
 — and the Factory Acts, 279.
 — how far its exponents would go, 141.
 Industrial system, the, condemned by its own issues, 326.
 — only a stage in social evolution, 327.
 Influence of German moralists on ethical systems, 276.
 Intuitionism, 275, 281.

J

James, Dr William, his objection to mere logic in explaining social life, 237.
 — on pragmatism, 291-2.
 Japanese patriotism and filial piety, the social dynamics, 7.
 Jevons, Prof. Stanley, on trade cycles, 326.
 Joël, Karl, on free will, 171.
 Jourdain, M., on St Thomas Aquinas, 336.
 Justice, history and theories of, 208 *et seq.*

K

Kant, Immanuel, his contribution to philosophy, 275.
 Kant's, Immanuel, definition of liberty, 172.
 Kropotkin, Prince, anticipated by Dr Chalmers as to land production, 14.
 — on economics, 340.
 — on intensive cultivation of the land, 333.

L

Labour colonies necessary, 214.

Labour Party in Parliament, 73.
 Land, and the burdens it should bear, 215 *et seq.*
 — back to the, advocated by Chalmers, 338.
 Land question, the, 324.
 Land taxation, Dr Chalmers on, 16.
 Land tax, the, what it yields, 351.
 Langland, Wm., *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, 242.
 Lassalle, Ferdinand, and the explanation of society, 65.
 Laurie, Prof. S. S., on will-reason, 165.
 Liberty, a social agency, 127, 147 *et seq.*
 — and self-protection, 176.
 — categories of, 175-7.
 — character and limits, 172 *et seq.*
 — economic province of, 198 *et seq.*
 — intellectual, province of, 193 *et seq.*
 — its positive character, 180.
 — political, province of, 182 *et seq.*
 — religious, province of, 197 *et seq.*
 Lorenzo Ridolfi, eminent Italian economist, 297.
 Lowell, on liberty, 148.
 Luxury, Dr Chalmers' definition of, 16.

M

Mackinnon, Dr, on liberty, 161.
 Maeterlinck, Maurice, on morals, 287-9.
 — on justice, courage, kindness, and honour—the social dynamics, 6.
 Maine, Sir H., on social laws, 63.
 — on village communities, 241.
 Malthus, Thos. R., his life work, 3.
 — his teachings, 23, 27-9, 30-2, 38-9.
 Marx, Karl, "Das Kapital," 59 *et seq.*, 65.

- Masterman, C. F. G., on poverty, 44.
 Masterman, N., on Chalmers, 19,
 20, 358.
 Mill, John Stuart, and altruistic
 utility, 179.
 — and utilitarianism, 230.
 — his estimates of Chalmers, 38.
 — on *feeling*, 165, 167, 255.
 — on liberty, 160-1, 164-5, 175-8.
 — on self-protection, 173.
 — quotation from Bentham, 225.
 Moncada, Sancho de, 298.
 Monopolies, 55.
 Montchrétien, Antoine, 297.
 Moral intuitions, affected by evil,
 281-2.
 — theories, applied to business,
 279.
 — theories as tested by experience,
 281.
 — theory, the, to be adopted, 286.
 More, Henry, Cambridge moralist,
 275.
 Muir, Thomas, and foreign trade,
 297.
 Münsterberg, Dr, his work on *The
 Eternal Values*, 171.

N

- National loans opposed by Dr
 Chalmers, 354.
 — resources examined by Dr Chal-
 mers, 13, 14.
 Nations, historical development of,
 240 *et seq.*
 North, Sir Dudley, his discourse
 on trade, 298.
 Nys, Dr Ernest, on Accadian civili-
 sation, 297.
 — on the Aristotelean ideal, 336.

O

- Oman, Prof., on the development
 of communities, 241.
 Ossa, Melchior, 297.

P

- Parliaments, origin of, 183.
 Patmore, Coventry, and religion in
 daily life, 237.
 Paul, St, on *love*, the highest motive
 of actions, 113.
 Pauperism, treatment of, by Dr
 Chalmers, 358.
 Peel, Sir Robert, and the banking
 interests, 186.
 Pensions, old-age, 99.
 Pentland, Lord, on social in-
 struction, 68.
 Personality, how best understood,
 293.
 Philosophers, modern, and their
 applied theories, 275.
 Philosophic principles, need of, 160.
Piers Plowman, Langland's, 242.
 Pitt, William, and national distress,
 28.
 Plato, 58, 113, 208, 246, 297.
 Plumptre, Dean, on landed pro-
 perty, 205.
 — on how the land question may
 be solved, 216.
 Polycarp, martyrdom of, 246.
 Population, checks on, 30-2.
 — Malthus' essay on, 27-32.
 — Pitt's proposals as to, 31.
 Poverty and pauperism, distin-
 guished by Dr Chalmers, 359.
 Poverty, elimination of, 41.
 — is it essential to social life? 43.
 Pragmatism, claims on behalf of,
 291-2.
 Primogeniture defended, 356.
 Pronouncements, economic, by
 Chalmers, 47-8, 352 *ad finem*.

Q

- Quesnay and his economic teach-
 ings, 297.

R

- Rabelais, François, 212.
 Ratke, Wolfgang, 212.
 Reformatories, need for, 214.
 Reform Bill, opposed by Dr Chalmers, 357.
 Reforms, fiscal, advocated by Dr Chalmers, 355.
 Religion, its places in daily life, 236 *et seq.*
 Renaissance, the, 119.
 Revolts of the peasantry, 242.
 Revolution, French, and social agencies, 26.
 Ricardo, David, his followers opposed to Chalmers, 38.
 "Right to work," the, examined, 56 *et seq.*
 Ritchie, Prof., on liberty, 154.
 — on Spencer, 173.
 Rothe, Richard, his theory of society, 276.
 Rousseau, Jean Jacques, as an educationist, 212.
 Rowntree, Mr, a scientific exponent of social life, 65.
 Rule of life, the, 55.
 Ruskin, John, art criticism and economics, 35-6.
 — his objection to science and logic as explaining life, 237.
 — Ruskin's "Munera Pulveris," where the moral element in economics is emphasised, 8.

S

- Schiller, Dr, on humanism, 291.
 Schleiermacher, Friedrich, his theory of society, 276.
 Schoolmen, the, and their subtle distinctions, 275.
 Seeböhm, Fredric, on the English village life, 241.
 Semetics, the, and economics, 297.

- Serfdom superseded by the guilds and wage-earning, 283.
 Shaftesbury, third Earl of, his place in philosophy, 255.
 Shaw, G. Bernard, his objections to science and logic as the sole explanation of the moral universe, 237.
 Sidgwick, Prof., on ethical systems, 275.
 Slavery once sanctioned, but now condemned, 283.
 Smith, Adam, his splendid service to commerce, 252.
 — on tariffs, 200.
 — on taxation of land, 345.
 — to economic science, 298.
 Social agencies: brotherhood, 228 *et seq.*
 — development, phases of, 116 *et seq.*
 — distinctions, how to be treated, 222 *et seq.*
 — equality, 204 *et seq.*
 — evils, Mr C. F. G. Masterman on, 44.
 — evils, relation of economics to, 58 *et seq.*
 — evils, relation of ethics to, 58.
 — evils, require moral and economic treatment, 42, 342-3.
 — ideal, agencies for realisation of, 50.
 — ideal, agencies of, their relative positions, 146 *et seq.*
 — ideal, an inspiration to social service, 77 *et seq.*
 — ideal, attitude of the cautious, 133 *et seq.*
 — ideal, attitude of the confident, 140 *et seq.*
 — ideal, attitude of the hopeful, 136 *et seq.*
 — ideal, attitude of the incredulous, 130 *et seq.*
 — ideal, cannot be defined, but only described, 53-4.

- Social ideal, described, 54, 127.
 — ideal, Dr Chalmers on, 366-8.
 — ideal, influence of religious spirit on, 87 *et seq.*
 — ideal, its claims for consideration, 50 *et seq.*
 — ideal, not identical with its agencies, 52.
 — ideal, some important aids, 87 *et seq.*
 — ideal, the, attitudes towards it, 126 *et seq.*
 — liberty, its foundation, character, and limits, 169 *et seq.*
 — life, haphazard treatment of, 75.
 — life, not explained by the material, 285.
 — life, scientific spirit applied to, 65, 69.
 — philosophy, an aid to social betterment, 100, 101.
 — progress, conditions of, 102 *et seq.*
 — progress, Dr Chalmers' interest in, 29.
 — science, the place it should have in theological colleges, 11 *et seq.*
 — service, the rule of life, 55 *et seq.*
 — work, demands, intelligence and forethought, 85.
 Socialism, its influence gradually being asserted, 187-90.
 — its materialistic interpretation of life inadequate, 285.
 — meaning of, 52.
 Society, how it originated and developed, 240-1.
 — requires a strong moral foundation, 284.
 — science of, 62 *et seq.*
 Sociology, content of, 9.
 Socrates, his contribution to intellectual and moral life, 246.
 Spence, Wm., on food resources of Great Britain, 14.
 Spencer, Herbert, emphasises *feeling* in moral discussions, 165, 255.
 — exponent of society, 65.
 — his formula of justice, 173.
 — on justice, 209.
 Spender, Mr Harold, on taxation of land, 351.
 Stephen, Sir James, and Utilitarianism, 230.
 — on liberty, 153.
 Stepniak, Sergius, on development communities, 241.
 Stoics, the, their large view of life, 113, 246.
 Strikes, their origin, 270 *et seq.*
 Sturt, Mr Henry, his criticism of Mr Bradley, 165.
 Subsidies, Dr Chalmers on Government, 15.
 Success, false conceptions of, 81.
- T
- Taff Vale decision, the, 73.
 Tariffs, protective, 200.
 Taxation and the landlord's position, 346-8, 350.
 — its justification, 16.
 — of all protected professions and trades, 16, 107, 350.
 — of fundholders advocated by Dr Chalmers, 351.
 — of land, advocated by Dr Chalmers, 215, 342-5.
 — of unearned incomes, 107.
 Tennyson on liberty, 148.
 Territorial imposts, defended, 344.
 Thinker, the, special functions of, 251 *et seq.*
 Thoreau, H. D., on liberty, 174.
Thought, its place in moral theories, 254 *et seq.*
 Trade, foreign, too insecure for a national foundation, 338.
 Trades unions defended by Dr Chalmers, 70-1, 355-6.

Trades unions, how they originated, 270 *et seq.*
 — service rendered by them, 70.
 — their history a record of fierce conflicts, 70 *et seq.*
 — their resources, 74.
 Trusts, menace to social life, 98.

U

Unemployed, the, 56 *et seq.*, 321.
 Unity of human life, 8-9, 65, 163, 166, 170, 292, 296, 329.
 Utilitarianism difficult to describe, 230.
 — long reign of, 260.
 — preferred to intuitionism, 275.
 Utility, theory of, in operation, 265 *et seq.*

V

Vinogradoff, Prof. Paul, on the origin of the township and manor, 243.
 Voluntary societies and social relationships, 96 *et seq.*

W

Wage-earning not the final stage in social evolution, 283.

Walker, Dr Norman, biographer of Chalmers, 37.
 Wallace, A. Russel, and solution of land problem, 216.
 — scientific exponent of society, 65.
 Ward, Dr, his objection to science and logic as sole explanations of the moral universe, 237.
 War, explanation of, 241.
 Wealth, how it may be distributed, 16, 107, 350.
 Wells, H. G., *good-will*, the social dynamic, 6, 289, 290.
 Westermarck, Prof., exponent of society, 65.
 — his testimony as to family life, 287.
 — on content of sociology, 8 *et seq.*
 — on origin of morals, 291.
 Weyde, Eberhard von, and Elberfeld system, 297.
 Will, as psychology reveals it, 254 *et seq.*
 — freedom of, 160 *et seq.*
 Worker, relation to the thinker, 251 *et seq.*
 Working - classes and political power, 122 *et seq.*
 Working men, Dr Chalmers' claims on behalf of, 339.
 Wundt, Prof., and the new psychologists, 254.

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